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Effective classroom management strategies, professional development needs, and policy recommendations for reducing discipline infractions

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Effective classroom management strategies, professional development needs, and policy
recommendations for reducing discipline infractions

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Educational Administration
in the Department of Educational Leadership

Mississippi State, Mississippi

April 2021

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and policy recommendations for reducing discipline infractions

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Candidate for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Students across the country experience negative effects due to losses in classroom instruction time caused by exclusionary discipline. In Mississippi, 11.8% of students received 1 or more in-school suspensions and 9.7% of students received 1 or more out-of-school suspensions during the 2013-14 school year.

This study sought to determine effective classroom management strategies for addressing discipline infractions, identify professional development needs of teachers and administrators focused on effective classroom management strategies, describe the role of the principal in promoting professional management strategies and reducing discipline infractions, and determine recommendations for related school policies.

Mississippi public school districts serving students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grades. All school districts were located in rural areas across the state.

Participants in the study included 3 administrators and 5 teachers. All participants had 6 or more years of experience.

The research design selected for the study was a qualitative approach. Phenomenological research was conducted to analyze participants' experiences relating to classroom management, discipline, administration, and policy.

Participants were interviewed about their experiences and opinions regarding classroom management strategies, professional development, the role of the principal, and policy recommendations all relating to reducing discipline infractions and increasing student achievement. The data were analyzed to determine emergent themes among the participants in response to the research questions and to provide recommendations for professional development and policy changes.

Common themes were identified through the participants' interviews. The findings showed that participants believed positive reinforcement, academic supports, behavior supports, relationships, planning, and teaching expectations and consequences were the most effective classroom management strategies. Participants identified behavior supports, seating, grouping, PBIS, classroom management plans, teaching children from poverty, classroom relationships, teaching expectations, student engagement, planning, and providing feedback as professional development needs. Participants described the role of the administrator as supporting teachers, maintaining consistency and fairness, establishing relationships with teachers and students, and maintaining a presence in classrooms. Policy recommendations included increased consistency, stronger parental involvement policies, adjustments to non-violent offenses, classroom management professional development for new teachers, including teachers in administrative processes, policies based upon grade levels, and more detailed PBIS policies.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to several members of my family. First, I wish to dedicate the dissertation to my husband, Shane, who always handled our daughters and household obligations so that I could focus on coursework, research, and many late-night writing sessions. He has always provided love, support, and encouragement. Second, I wish to dedicate the dissertation to my daughters, Gracie and Audrey. I know that sometimes they did not understand why mommy was so busy, but I pray that one day they will remember the effort and accomplishment and know that they too can do anything they set their minds to accomplish. Third, I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my dad, who instilled a strong work ethic and confidence in me from a very early age. Finally, I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my grandfather, Henry, who was always so proud of any educational achievements I attained. Although he passed away before I even started the doctoral journey, I know he would be my biggest cheerleader.

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I wish to thank all of my coworkers who did not complain about my endless prattling about the study when things were going well and venting when they were not. Thank you to my supervisor and friend, Dr. Susan Johnson, who always believed I could earn my doctoral degree.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General Background of the Study

The role of the school administrator is fundamental in providing leadership for maintaining a safe environment conducive for learning (Marzano, 2011). However, in today's educational system, teachers and administrators must balance the need to instruct all students with the need to maintain order and a safe learning environment (Tidwell et al., 2003).

According to Justice Franklin Powell in his concurring opinion in *New Jersey vs. T.L.O.* (1985):

The primary duty of school officials and teachers, as the Court states, is the education and training of young people... Without first establishing discipline and maintaining order, teachers cannot begin to educate their students. And apart from education, the school has the obligation to protect pupils from mistreatment by other children. (p. 351)

Responses to student misbehavior include classroom and exclusionary consequences, i.e., administrative discipline, in-school suspension (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS), and expulsion (Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Instances of exclusionary discipline increased after the zero-tolerance policy mandating Gun-Free Schools Act was signed into law in 1994 (Skiba & Losen, 2016). Not only did schools develop zero-tolerance policies for possession of firearms, the new zero-tolerance policies included offenses such as drugs, gang activity, classroom disruptions, smoking, and dress code violations (Skiba & Losen, 2016).

Prior research studies identified effective classroom management as a key way to reduce the number of exclusionary discipline occurrences (Conroy et al., 2008; Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). Overwhelmingly, studies have shown that components of effective classroom management (clear expectations, routines, efficient use of time) predicted higher student achievement (Conroy et al., 2008; Stronge et al., 2011).

In order for teachers to implement classroom management components more effectively, schools must provide intentional professional development (Gregory et al, 2014; Kraft & Blazar, 2013; Marquez et al., 2016). Studies showed that teachers who received targeted professional development increased their classroom management knowledge and application (Gregory et al., 2014; Kraft & Blazar, 2013; Marquez et al., 2016). Teachers, administrators, and policymakers must work together to ensure critical professional development activities are promulgated along with essential policies in order to provide effective learning for all students (Kraft & Blazar, 2013; Marquez et al., 2016; Tidwell, Flannery, & Lewis-Palmer, 2003).

The administrator's role in classroom management includes working with teachers to develop school-wide discipline policies, supporting teachers to enforce those policies, and maintaining visibility throughout the school day (Curran, 2017; Marzano, 2011; Mukuria, 2002; Nooruddin & Baig, 2014; Welsh & Little, 2018). Administrators should take the lead in clarifying rules and ensuring that policies and procedures are in place to ensure "safe and respectful behavior toward teachers and other students" (Marzano, 2011, p. 86). As schools and districts consider changes in policies in order to improve classroom management and decrease instances of exclusionary discipline, teachers require professional development in order to effectively implement those policy changes (Mansfield et al., 2018; Skiba & Losen, 2016; Welsh & Little, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

When teachers fail in their classroom management to maintain appropriate order, student discipline issues are addressed through individual referrals to the school office and often result in exclusionary consequences such as out-of-school suspension (OSS) and in-school-suspension (ISS; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Although associated with negative student effects (fewer instructional minutes, lower academic achievement, missed educational opportunities, increased rates of school drop-out, and increased rates of entry into the juvenile justice system), OSS is used as one of the most common ways to address behavioral issues including offenses such as defiance, disrespect, skipping class, and excessive tardies (Flannery et al., 2013). Less than 10% of suspensions nationwide are for serious offenses (Gahungu, 2018).

Many research studies examined the effects of time out of class on student achievement and outcomes (Arcia, 2006; Cholewa et al., 2018; Christie, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004; Gahungu, 2018; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Marchbanks et al., 2014; Miles & Stipek, 2006; Noltemeyer et al., 2015; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Perry & Morris, 2014). According to Gahungu, (2018), students who experience exclusionary discipline miss so many educational opportunities they are often unable to catch up when they return to class. Other studies found inverse relationships between academic achievement scores and rates of exclusionary discipline (Arcia, 2006; Cholewa et al., 2018; Christie et al., 2004; Gregory et al., 2010; Marchbanks et al., 2014; Noltemeyer et al., 2015; Perry & Morris, 2014). Researchers also found a positive relationship between dropout rates and rates of exclusionary discipline (Noltemeyer et al., 2015).

In order to mitigate the effects of OSS, administrators choose ISS as a consequence to minor classroom offenses (Amuso, 2007). While assigned to ISS, students receive assignments from their classroom teachers and attempt to complete them on their own in an alternate location,

usually a classroom or space designated for ISS and supervised by non-certified personnel (Amuso, 2007). Again, students are excluded from educational opportunities such as socialization, the ability to ask questions, and remediation during the time they are in ISS (Short, 1988).

According to the Office of Civil Rights data, a large number of students receive exclusionary discipline (Civil Rights Data Collection, n.d.). During the 2015-2016 school year, 2.56 million students (5%) received one or more OSSs and 2.7 million students (5.4%) received one or more ISSs on a national level (Civil Rights Data Collection, n.d.). In Mississippi during the same school year, 47,757 students (9.7%) received one or more OSSs and 55,777 students (11.4%) received one or more ISSs (Civil Rights Data Collection, n.d.).

Identifying strategies for reducing the number of office referrals and subsequent instances of exclusionary discipline in the forms of ISS and OSS will help to address the problems associated with students being absent from classes due to misbehavior. Teachers and administrators' perspectives regarding professional development needs relating to classroom management may provide relevant, targeted first steps toward implementing effective classroom management strategies.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to identify professional development needs of teachers and administrators for promoting and providing effective classroom management strategies in order to reduce occurrences of discipline infractions. More specifically, the study sought to determine effective classroom management strategies for addressing discipline infractions, describe the role of the principal in promoting effective classroom management strategies and reducing discipline infractions, and provide

recommendations for related school policies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and school leaders as participants to explore their lived experiences.

Research Questions

The following overarching research question guided this study: How do teachers and administrators describe strategies for effective classroom management for decreasing discipline infractions, their professional development needs related to effective classroom management, the role of the principal in promoting effective classroom management, and recommendations for related policy changes?

The following secondary research questions guided the study. The secondary research questions were used as semi-structured interview questions.

1. Effective Classroom Management Strategies
 - A. What classroom management strategies do teachers and administrators find most effective for promoting high student achievement?
 - B. What classroom management strategies do teachers and administrators find most effective for reducing discipline infractions?
2. Professional Development Needs
 - A. How do teachers and administrators describe their professional development experiences related to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student academic achievement?
 - B. What do teachers and administrators perceive as their top professional development needs in relation to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student academic achievement?

- C. What professional development delivery types or formats do teachers and administrators find most effective?
- 3. Role of the Administrator
 - A. What is the role of the administrator in terms of positive classroom management strategies to reduce discipline infractions?
 - B. What is the role of the administrator in professional development in relation to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions?
- 4. Policy Recommendations
 - A. What policy changes do administrators and teachers recommend related to positive classroom management for reducing discipline infractions?
 - B. What policy changes do administrators and teachers recommend related to professional development focused on classroom management for promoting student achievement?

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are provided for meaning and clarity. The terms were used throughout the study.

Classroom management involves “all the things teachers must do in the classroom to foster students’ academic involvement and cooperation in classroom activities to create conducive learning environment” (George et al., 2017).

Exclusionary discipline refers to ISS and OSS and “involves the use of suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary actions resulting in removal from the typical educational environment” (Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010)

Flexible seating/seating options refers to the furniture and equipment used in the classroom including moveable furniture, round tables for group discussions, writable walls, yoga

ball chairs, rugs, bean bag chairs, etc. for the purpose of increasing active learning, improving classroom management, and positively affecting student behavior and satisfaction (Clarke, Nelson, & Gallagher, 2020).

Grouping arrangement refers to within-class grouping of students by ability or mastery level as well as heterogeneous grouping for cooperative learning in order to facilitate classroom instruction.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, (2016) *in-school suspension (ISS)* refers to instances when students are removed from their typical classroom settings for disciplinary purposes. These students “remain under the direct supervision of school personnel” and are in the same physical location of said school personnel (p.12).

Non-violent offense refers to classroom discipline issues such as disrespect, disruption, cell phone use, tardies, sleeping in class, dress code violations, and other similar offenses which cause no physical harm and pose no safety threat to the student or others (Skiba & Losen, 2016).

Out-of-school suspension (OSS) refers to instances in which students are temporarily removed from their typical classroom setting for disciplinary services to another setting such as home. These instances provide no educational services to the removed students (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2016).

Professional development refers to the activities and interactions teachers and administrators experience in order to increase their skills and knowledge, improve practice, and contribute to their growth as practitioners. These activities include seminars, workshops, professional learning communities, peer coaching, conferences, institutes, mentoring, book clubs, teacher networks, action research, online activities with and without social interaction, self-examination, and additional traditional or self-paced courses (Desimone, 2011).

Violent offense refers to discipline issues such as fighting, gang activity, weapons possession, drug possession and use, and other similar offenses which cause or can cause physical harm or pose a safety threat to the student or others.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 1. The study included teachers and administrators from public schools in Mississippi. First, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with participants to identify effective strategies used for classroom management to reduce discipline infractions and promote academic achievement. Second, the participants were asked to identify recommendations for professional development to reduce discipline infractions and promote academic achievement. Third, the participants were asked to discuss the role of the principal, and identify recommendations for policy changes to reduce discipline infractions and promote academic achievement.

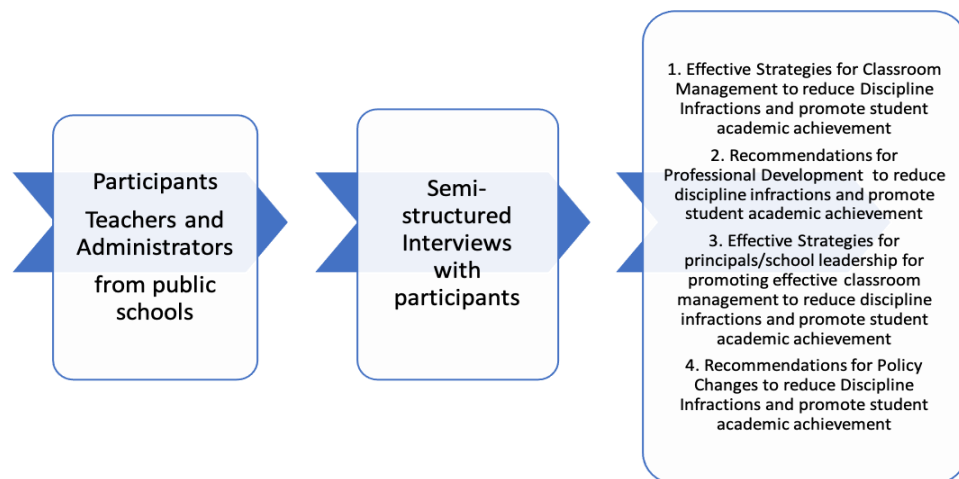


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Because the study focused on the behaviors, strategies, and professional development for teachers and administrators, the study was grounded in principles aligned with adult learning theory. In addition, Bandura's social learning theory was selected to help explain behaviors associated with teachers and principals' interactions with students. Further, transformational leadership theory was used to help illustrate the importance of the role of the school leader in promoting student achievement and effective classroom management.

According to Knowles (1973), adult learners have the need and capacity to be self-directing, to utilize their experiences in learning, to self-identify readiness to learn, and to organize learning around the adult's own life problems. Adult learning theory operates on four assumptions: (1) as people grow and mature, the self-concept changes from dependency on others to self-directedness; (2) as people mature, their experiences become a resource for learning; (3) as people mature, their readiness to learn is increasingly related to the tasks required for the roles they fill; and (4) as people mature, they have an increasingly problem-centered approach to learning (Knowles, 1973).

Teachers and students interact with each other constantly providing learning experiences for both groups. Bandura's social learning theory states that people learn from each other through observation, imitation, modeling and reinforcement (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Effective teachers teach and model classroom expectations, allowing students to observe and imitate appropriate behaviors (Grasley-Boy et al., 2019; MacSuga & Simonsen, 2011; Simonsen et al., 2014). They then reinforce appropriate behaviors in order to increase the likelihood that students will use them (Grasley-Boy et al., 2019; MacSuga & Simonsen, 2011; Simonsen et al., 2014). It is also through social learning that teachers acquire appropriate classroom management

skills. Professional development models including coaching and peer observations rely on the ability of teachers to learn from the models of their peers (Kraft et al., 2018).

Through transformational and shared instructional leadership, administrators shape the climate of the school (Marks & Printy, 2003). Transformational leaders work “to raise participants’ level of commitment, to encourage them in reaching their fullest potential, and to support them in transcending their own self-interest for a larger good” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 372). Shared instructional leaders provide resources and instructional support, such as professional development opportunities, to teachers in order to “maintain congruence and consistency of the educational program” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p.374). Shared instructional leaders also promote effective climates for learning, create supportive working environments, and monitor curriculum and instruction (Marks & Printy, 2003). Administrators must also consider the impact of misbehavior and discipline on the educational program, safety, and climate within their schools and provide the resources and support necessary to decrease misbehavior and increase student academic outcomes.

Overview of the Methodology

This study included a qualitative research design using the phenomenological approach. Phenomenological research “describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by the participants” in order to arrive at the true nature of the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 38-39). The study employed phenomenological research design to describe the experiences and recommendations of teachers and administrators related to classroom management strategies, professional development, principal/school leadership strategies, and recommendations for policy changes within the context of the public school. The

study incorporated semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators employed by public schools across Mississippi.

Delimitations of the Study

Teachers and building level administrators employed by public schools in Mississippi during the 2018-19 school year were recruited to participate. Teachers were selected because they are the primary office referral writers for occurrences of student offenses. Office referrals have the potential to become instances of exclusionary discipline. Moreover, teachers have the greatest impact on the climate and behaviors in the classroom (Stronge et al., 2011). The researcher deemed it critical to hear their experiences of successful strategies of classroom management and their needs in terms of related professional development. Building level administrators were participants in the study because they are responsible for creating school culture and assigning consequences to office referrals which gives them a unique perspective regarding current policy, classroom management effectiveness, and professional development needs.

Significance of the Study

The study will inform colleges and schools of education about information related to effective classroom management addressing disciplinary infractions. In addition, the study will inform district and building level administrators, teachers, and policymakers about successful classroom management strategies and professional development needs in order to support effective classroom management and reduce instances of discipline infractions.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the study. The first chapter includes the following sections: (a) background, (b) statement of the problem, (c) purpose of the study, (d) research questions, (e) definitions of terms, (f) conceptual framework of the study, (g) an overview of the methodology of the study, (h) delimitations, and (i) significance of the study.

Chapter II includes a review of the related literature focusing on (a) issues with exclusionary discipline, (b) classroom management, and (c) professional development. Key themes include student discipline infractions as major concerns, effective strategies and professional development for classroom management for reducing discipline infractions, effective strategies and professional development for classroom management for promoting student achievement, and policies relating to classroom management and discipline.

Chapter III describes the methodology used in the study. Topics include the background information, participant selection methods, data collection methods, and analysis methods used to determine answers to the research questions.

Chapter IV presents the findings based on data collection and analysis. Data for the study are qualitative and presented in a narrative format with emergent themes.

Chapter V includes conclusions and implications obtained from the study as well as recommendations for further research. Recommendations are made for professional development topics and delivery models as well as considerations for related policy changes.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of current literature related to students and classroom discipline, and professional development and classroom management. The chapter begins with discussions on (a) concerns related to student discipline infractions, (b) effective strategies and professional development for classroom management for reducing discipline infractions, (c) effective strategies and professional development for classroom management for promoting student achievement, (d) related policies, and (e) the role of the principal related to reducing discipline infractions.

Historical Perspectives Related to Classroom Management and Disciplinary Consequences

From the early days of schools, educators had to determine how to manage their classrooms and handle disruptive students (Gahungu, 2018). In early days, having students sit in a corner away from their classmates with a “dunce hat” and excluding them from activities was a popular option (Morris & Howard, 2003). Educators utilized verbal reprimands, corporal punishment, after-school detention, ISS, OSS, and fines as consequences for student infractions (Allman & Slate, 2011). Common disciplinary consequences excluded students rather than provided remediation for inappropriate behaviors (Bergh & Cowell, 2013). Students received exclusionary discipline consequences for major offenses such as fighting/physical aggression, abusive language, bullying, property damage, and illegal substance use as well as minor offenses

such as tardiness, defiance/disrespect, and skipping class/school (Bergh & Cowell, 2013; Flannery et al., 2013).

Effects of Exclusionary Discipline

Although OSS remains as “one of the most commonly used disciplinary consequences for student misbehavior” (Allman & Slate, 2011, p. 2), many scholars described the negative effects of OSS including encouraging repeat offenses (Allman & Slate, 2011; Miles & Stipek, 2006; Schreur, 2006), increasing drop-out rates (Allman & Slate, 2011; Noltemeyer et al., 2015), and reducing academic performance (Arcia, 2006; Gregory et al., 2010; Marchbanks et al., 2014; Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Because of the negative effects associated with OSS, many schools included ISS more often as a consequence instead of OSS (Cholewa et al., 2018). While students receiving ISS remained on the school property, they were removed from the typical learning environment and no longer had opportunities for socialization, questioning, and remediation (Short, 1988). Students who received ISS as a discipline consequence typically had a higher drop-out rate (Cholewa et al., 2018; Commission for Positive Change in the Oakland Public Schools, 1992; Noltemeyer et al., 2015) and lower rates of academic achievement (Cholewa et al., 2018; Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Additionally, one study found that ISS had a negative impact on students’ self-esteem (Commission for Positive Change in the Oakland Public Schools, 1992).

Classroom Management

Classroom management has been identified as “one of the most influential factors in determining success for first-year teachers and as the most influential factor in students’ academic successes” (Monroe et al., 2010, para. 1). The existing literature indicated a documented need of classroom management training identified by pre-service and in-service

teachers (Gable et al., 2012; Stormont et al., 2011). Studies also showed correlation between effective classroom management and higher rates of student academic achievement (Gage et al., 2017; George et al., 2017; State et al., 2019)

Previous research studies identified several components of effective classroom management. According to Marzano and Marzano (2003), teachers should establish clear expectations and consequences, establish clear learning goals, exhibit assertive behavior, provide flexible learning goals, take a personal interest in students, use equitable and positive classroom behaviors, be aware of high-needs students, and intentionally foster teacher-student relationships. Other features of effective classroom management include maximizing structure in the classroom, teaching and reinforcing expectations, keeping students actively engaged in classroom activities and lessons, and using a range of strategies to respond to both appropriate and inappropriate behaviors (Grasley-Boy et al., 2019; MacSuga & Simonsen, 2011; Simonsen et al., 2014).

Professional Development

While issues with behavior and exclusionary discipline consequences are well documented, many pre-service teachers leave university coursework without a solid background and practical applications of classroom management skills and theories (Begeny & Martens, 2006; Monroe et al., 2010). Studies found that pre-service teachers perceived there was a disconnect between what is taught in classes and what is found in practice in relation to classroom management (Monroe et al., 2010; Stoughton, 2007). For many teachers, the first practical experience with classroom management comes either at the end of an internship during their final year of college or during their first year teaching in their own classrooms (Dobler et al., 2009; Monroe et al., 2010; Siebert, 2005).

A meta-analysis study focused on in-service teachers found that professional development programs with fourteen or more contact hours showed a positive, significant effect with an average effect size of 0.54 (Yoon et al., 2007). These results indicated that providing professional development to teachers had a moderate effect on student achievement (Yoon et al., 2007).

Not all teachers require the same level of support in implementing effective classroom management (Simonsen et al., 2014). Researchers suggested that a multi-tiered system of identifying teachers at varying levels of need and providing appropriate supports would increase the effectiveness of in-service professional development (Simonsen et al., 2014; State et al., 2019). Three common options for providing various levels of support include self-management, online professional development, and coaching (Kraft et al., 2018; State et al., 2019).

Types of Professional Development

Various types of professional development were indicated in the related literature. Effective types of professional development included models such as professional learning communities, self-management, online professional development, and teacher coaching. Researchers also identified shared characteristics of effective professional development.

Professional learning communities (PLCs) refer to groups “of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way.” (Stoll et al., 2006, p. 223) The members of PLCs continuously look for and share new findings with the group in order to address specific topics and data-based goals, with the overall goal of improving student achievement (Stoll et al., 2006).

Self-management was identified in the literature as an efficient way to increase teachers’ use of specific classroom behavior-support practices (State et al., 2019). Additional research

indicated that self-management can increase the effectiveness of teachers' instructional practices (Allinder et al., 2000; MacSuga & Simonsen, 2011; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001). Self-management was found most effective when teachers consistently monitored, evaluated, and provided feedback to themselves (Simonsen et al., 2017).

Online professional development was found in the literature as a significant means of receiving training (State et al., 2019). One study noted online opportunities offered "unlimited reach, with various topics available to any teacher with online access" (State et al., 2019, p. 109). Several studies found that while easy to access and implement, online professional development alone, without follow-ups, lacked the effectiveness of online professional development paired with consultation or coaching (Jimenez et al., 2016; State et al., 2019). Studies in which coaching or consultation accompanied the online component found increased content knowledge and improved application within the classroom (Erickson et al., 2012).

Teacher coaching involves "an observation and feedback cycle in an ongoing instructional or clinical situation" (Kraft et al., 2018, p. 55) which provides teachers with tools to support student learning and achievement. Coaches model research-based practices and assist teachers in implementing these practices within their classrooms (Kraft et al., 2018). Coaching occurs when "peers observe teachers' instruction and provide feedback to help them improve" (Kraft et al., 2018, p. 548). Coaching can be combined with any number of additional professional development models such as group trainings, summer workshops, instructional content materials, or multi-media resources (Kraft et al., 2018). Several studies indicated that coaching produced at least a modest improvement in teachers' instructional practices (Gregory et al., 2014; Kraft et al., 2018; Kraft & Blazar, 2013).

Regardless of the delivery model, effective professional development practices share certain characteristics. Professional development must be ongoing, tied to other learning activities and school initiatives, encourages active learning by teachers, focused on student achievement, includes coaching or other forms of assistance, and includes constructive feedback (Darling-Hammond, Gardner, & Hyler, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; State et al., 2019; Yoon et al., 2007).

The Role of the Principal in Reducing Discipline Infractions

Principals directly affect many aspects of a school's culture, including discipline and student achievement (Curran, 2017; Marks & Printy, 2003; Marzano, 2011; Mukuria, 2002; Nooruddin & Baig, 2014; Welsh & Little, 2018). Previous studies have identified the following leadership strategies as effective toward managing student discipline: administrator supported schoolwide discipline plan or approach (Curran, 2017; Marzano, 2011; Nooruddin & Baig, 2014), teacher input and support of school discipline plans (Mukuria, 2002), administrator support of teachers and staff in handling discipline issues (Marzano, 2011; Mukuria, 2002; Nooruddin & Baig, 2014), and high levels of commitment to school goals (Mukuria, 2002).

Studies also showed that a principal's vision and goals for the school affected the rates at which suspensions were used (Mukuria, 2002; Welsh & Little, 2018). Mukuria (2002) found that principals in a study with the lowest suspension rates viewed district policies as a flexible guideline and utilized alternate strategies for handling student misbehavior. Welsh and Little (2018) found that administrators who were mostly concerned with students getting to college used strategies to remove distractions, including exclusionary discipline. The researchers also found that administrators who were mostly concerned with fostering citizenship employed discipline systems that taught and reinforced civic habits (Welsh & Little, 2018).

School Discipline Policies

School discipline policies have been influenced by federal law, state law, and district policies (Curran, 2017). In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed the Gun-Free Schools Act into law creating a federal mandate for zero-tolerance policies (Skiba & Losen, 2016). School district zero-tolerance policies also included drugs and gang activity and increased the use of suspension and expulsion for disruptions, smoking, and dress code violations (Skiba & Losen, 2016).

Results of research studies examining the negative effects of suspensions and expulsions led administrators and policy makers to consider alternatives to zero-tolerance and exclusionary discipline policies (Skiba & Losen, 2016). Initiatives such as School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), restorative practices, and district bans on exclusionary discipline for out of school suspensions for minor offenses were put in place to reduce excessive exclusionary discipline practices (Mansfield et al., 2018; Skiba & Losen, 2016; Welsh & Little, 2018).

Chapter Summary

Multiple studies showed the negative effects of exclusionary discipline consequences on students including increased drop-out rates, reduced academic achievement, and lower self-esteem (Allman & Slate, 2011; Arcia, 2006; Gregory et al., 2010; Marchbanks et al., 2014; Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Studies examined pre-service teacher training and found that in many cases that the teachers did not feel prepared to handle classroom management and discipline issues when they entered their own classrooms for the first time (Begeny & Martens, 2006; Dobler et al., 2009; Monroe et al., 2010; Siebert, 2005; Stoughton, 2007). When teachers were unable to maintain appropriate classroom management, students were more likely to receive exclusionary discipline consequences (Monroe et al., 2010).

In general, researchers found that when teachers participated in ongoing, relevant, timely professional development, teachers' effectiveness increased (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; State et al., 2019; Yoon et al., 2007). When professional development is centered around key classroom management skills, student behavior and academic performance improved (Simonsen et al., 2014).

Researchers described trends relating to the reversal of zero-tolerance policies due to their harmful consequences on student achievement (Mansfield et al., 2018; Skiba & Losen, 2016; Welsh & Little, 2018). Schools have begun implementing several new initiatives focusing on supports and restorative practices in order to reduce instances of exclusionary discipline practices (Mansfield et al., 2018; Skiba & Losen, 2016; Welsh & Little, 2018).

In order to determine the most relevant issues related to professional development aimed at improving classroom management and alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices, studies outlining various types of professional development highlighted the importance of relevant, timely, ongoing professional development regardless of the method of delivery. Studies also emphasized the relationship between administrators' vision and goals for the school and the rates at which exclusionary discipline were used (Mukuria, 2002; Welsh & Little, 2018).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III presents the methods and procedures used to facilitate the purpose of the study focused on the insights of teachers and administrators regarding classroom management strategies for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student achievement. In addition, the chapter presents the methods and procedures focused on professional development needs for classroom management to help reduce discipline infractions, strategies for the principal/school leader to help reduce discipline infractions, and recommendations for related policy changes. The chapter includes a description of the research design, research questions, research site, participants, and selection procedures, instruments and materials, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

Description of the Research Design and General Methodology

A qualitative research design was utilized in the study. Phenomenological research “describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by the participants” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 38-39) in order to arrive at the true nature of the phenomenon. This study employed a phenomenological research design to describe the experiences and recommendations of teachers and administrators related to classroom management strategies, professional development, principal/school leadership strategies, and recommendations for policy changes within the context of the public school. A phenomenological research design was selected because the study examined a small number of

participants' experiences relating to discipline, classroom management, professional development, policies, and the role principals play in those areas.

The goal of this study was to obtain effective strategies, professional development needs, and policy recommendations from teachers and administrators employed in public schools across Mississippi in order to improve classroom management skills and thereby improve student outcomes. Participants shared their experiences and opinions through semi-structured, individual interviews. Phenomenological research provided a means to study the shared experiences of classroom teachers and administrators in relation to classroom management and discipline issues during the 2018-19 school year. The phenomenological research design was selected because of the small number of participants and the researchers desire to compare and analyze their experiences for commonalities.

The Research Questions

The following overarching research question guided the study: How do teachers and administrators describe strategies for effective classroom management for decreasing discipline infractions, their professional development needs related to effective classroom management, the role of the principal in promoting effective classroom management, and recommendations for related policy changes?

Further, the following secondary research questions helped to guide the study. The secondary research questions were used to conduct the semi-structured individual interviews with the participants.

1. Effective Classroom Management Strategies

- A. What classroom management strategies do teachers and administrators find most effective for promoting high student achievement?

B. What classroom management strategies do teachers and administrators find most effective for reducing discipline infractions?

2. Professional Development Needs

A. How do teachers and administrators describe their professional development experiences related to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student academic achievement?

B. What do teachers and administrators perceive as their top professional development needs in relation to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student academic achievement?

C. What professional development delivery types or formats do teachers and administrators find most effective?

3. Role of the Administrator

A. What is the role of the administrator in terms of positive classroom management strategies to reduce discipline infractions?

B. What is the role of the administrator in professional development in relation to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions?

4. Policy Recommendations

A. What policy changes do administrators and teachers recommend related to positive classroom management for reducing discipline infractions?

B. What policy changes do administrators and teachers recommend related to professional development focused on classroom management for promoting student academic achievement?

Role of the Researcher

The researcher was a veteran teacher and positive behavior specialist with 15 years of experience in public schools. As a positive behavior specialist, the researcher worked with students, administrators, teachers, and other staff members in order to reduce repeat infractions and instances of exclusionary discipline.

The researcher held a bachelor's, master's, and specialist's degree from an accredited university and was guided by the dissertation chair throughout the research process. Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher obtained approval for the dissertation proposal from the dissertation committee and approval from the Mississippi State University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research.

Research Context or Site

The participants selected for this study were teachers and administrators with various levels of experience who were assigned to public schools in Mississippi. The study included teachers and administrators from a state with higher-than-average rates of exclusionary discipline sanctions. The participants were selected due to accessibility and familiarity to the researcher. The study was conducted using a phenomenological approach utilizing semi-structured interviews with participants via video/audio conferencing at agreed upon times.

The Recruitment Process for Participants

During recruitment of the participants, the researcher initially contacted seven people who were employed as building level administrators during the 2018-2019 school year via email. Administrators were asked to participate in the study as well as recommend teachers within their buildings to participate. Two administrators had been promoted to positions within the central

office and declined to participate. One of those administrators provided names of six teachers as potential participants. Another administrator agreed to participate and also provided names of six teachers as potential participants. Of those six, one teacher agreed to participate. Another administrator replied and declined to participate and declined to provide any other potential participants. Three administrators did not reply to the initial invitation or follow-up emails.

The researcher then contacted two additional administrators and four teachers who were also employed in public schools in Mississippi during the 2018-2019 school year. Out of those six potential participants, all six agreed to participate.

Participants

This phenomenological study includes responses from three administrators and five teachers employed by seven public schools in three districts across Mississippi. The eight participants held varying certifications and had varying years of experience. The researcher had current or previous working relationships with the participants.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher provided participants with an introduction letter explaining the purpose and nature of the study and that participation in the study would be voluntary and confidential. Once participants agreed to participate in the study, the researcher provided participants with a consent form which explained the reason for the study, the participants' role and rights, approximate length of study, study location, potential risks and benefits to the participant, and researcher contact information. Additionally, the document informed participants that participation was voluntary, and participants could choose to withdraw from the study at any time. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to conducting interviews.

Participants were not identified by their real names, and no personal information was attached. The researcher met with participants individually using Zoom video conferencing software. Interviews were conducted between June 8, 2020 and July 10, 2020. Each interview session lasted approximately 35 to 70 minutes.

As recommended in the literature by Creswell & Creswell (2018), the following steps were followed for the collection of data for the study. The interview sessions were conducted during mutually agreed upon times outside of working hours.

1. Key participants were identified. These included teachers and administrators who worked at public schools in Mississippi during the 2018-19 school year.
2. An interview protocol was developed in order to provide a framework for questioning.
3. Interviews were conducted via conferencing software: the participants connected from various locations.
4. Prior to the interview, the researcher obtained informed, written consent.
5. During the interview, the researcher used the secondary research questions, took notes, and audio recorded the sessions in order to ensure accuracy of transcripts.
6. The data were transcribed by the researcher following each interview session.

Data Analysis Procedures

Phenomenological research data analysis involved reviewing the interview transcripts to determine common themes related to classroom management, professional development needs, and policy changes. As recommended by Creswell & Creswell (2018), the following steps were followed for data analysis.

1. Data were prepared for analysis by first transcribing interviews and typing interview field notes into the software program *NVivo* (release 1.3)

2. A first reading of transcripts and notes provided overall emerging themes.
3. Transcripts and notes were typed and coded within *NVivo* software. Transcripts were saved into the project file. Codes were developed based upon common themes within participant responses and the guiding research questions.
4. The researcher used *NVivo* to sort and analyze the data. Transcripts, notes, and codes were reviewed and recoded multiple times in order to ensure accurate analysis of each participants experiences.
5. Triangulation was utilized to identify themes based on the convergence of perspectives from the participants. Themes were organized and refined based upon the guiding research questions.
6. The researcher reviewed major themes and findings with participants to ensure accuracy of findings through member checking.
7. The results of data analysis were presented in a narrative format including the bias brought to the study by the researcher.

Chapter Summary

This research study was a qualitative study using a phenomenological research design in order to gain insight into professional development needs of teachers and administrators for promoting and providing effective classroom management strategies in order to reduce occurrences of discipline infractions as described by teachers and administrators based upon their professional experiences. Participants provided descriptions about classroom management strategies, professional development experiences and needs, the role of the school principal in relation to classroom management and professional development and recommendations for changes to policies relating to classroom management and professional development. By

analyzing responses, the researcher identified emerging themes among participants to explain the phenomena of the relationships between classroom management, professional development, administrators, and policies examined by this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The purpose of the study was to identify professional development needs of teachers and administrators for promoting and providing effective classroom management strategies in order to reduce instances of discipline infractions. The study also sought to determine effective classroom management strategies for addressing discipline infractions. Other goals of the study were to describe the role of the principal in promoting effective classroom management strategies, reduce discipline infractions, and provide recommendations for related school policies. Participants shared their experiences and opinions through semi-structured, individual interviews.

A qualitative research design was used to collect data for the study. The following overarching research question guided the study.

How do teachers and administrators describe strategies for effective classroom management for decreasing discipline infractions, their professional development needs related to effective classroom management, the role of the principal in promoting effective classroom management, and recommendations for related policy changes?

1. Effective Classroom Management Strategies

- A. What classroom management strategies do teachers and administrators find most effective for promoting high student achievement?

- B. What classroom management strategies do teachers and administrators find most effective for reducing discipline infractions?

2. Professional Development Needs

- A. How do teachers and administrators describe their professional development experiences related to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student academic achievement?
- B. What do teachers and administrators perceive as their top professional development needs in relation to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student academic achievement?
- C. What professional development delivery types or formats do teachers and administrators find most effective?

3. Role of the Administrator

- A. What is the role of the administrator in terms of positive classroom management to reduce discipline infractions?
- B. What is the role of the administrator in professional development in relation to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions?

4. Policy Recommendations

- A. What policy changes do administrators and teachers recommend related to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions?
- B. What policy changes do administrators and teachers recommend related to classroom management for promoting student achievement?

Participants in the Study

Three building level administrators and five teachers from public school districts in Mississippi were selected and participated in the study. Demographic information related to their positions during the 2018-19 school year, educational level, and years of experience are included in the findings.

Table 1 presents participants' demographic data. Data were collected on the participants' gender, position during the 2018-2019 school year, and level of education.

Table 1

Participants' Gender, Position, and Level of Education

Educational Level	Teacher		Administrator		Total	Percentage
	Female	Male	Female	Male		
Bachelor's Degree	0	1	0	0	1	12.5
Master's Degree	3	1	1	1	6	75
Educational Specialist's Degree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doctoral Degree	0	0	1	0	1	12.5
Total	3	2	2	1	8	100
Percent	37.5	25	25	12.5	100	

The participants included five females (62.5%) and three males (37.5%). The participants held either teaching positions ($n=5$, 62.5%) or administrative positions ($n=3$, 37.5%). The majority of participants reported having Master's degrees ($n=6$, 75%). Other degrees reported included Bachelor's ($n=1$, 12.5%) and Doctorate ($n=1$, 12.5%). In general, the majority of the

participants were females ($n=5$, 62.5%), teachers ($n=5$, 62.5%), and held Master's degrees ($n=6$, 75%).

Table 2 presents data relating to participants' years of experience. The data are organized by the number of years of experience in participants' positions.

Table 2

Participants' Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Teacher	Administrator	Total	Percentage
1-5 Years	0	0	0	0
6-10 Years	1	0	1	12.5
11-15 Years	1	1	2	25
16-20 Years	1	1	2	25
21-25 Years	2	1	3	37.5
Total	5	3	8	100
Percent	62.5	37.5	100	

All participants in the study had at least eight years of educational experience ($n=8$, 100%). Teachers' years of experience ranged from eight to twenty-five years. Administrators' years of experience ranged from fourteen to twenty-five years. Overall, the majority of the teachers had 16 or more years of experience ($n=3$, 37.5%) and the majority of administrators had 16 or more years of experience ($n=2$, 25%).

Participants' Descriptive Attributes

The researcher assigned each participant a pseudonym in order to protect his or her identity. The following names were used to describe the participants in the study: Shirley, Claire, Cathy, Dennis, Emmitt, Shelby, Rebecca, and Frank.

Shirley taught third grade during the 2018-2019 school year. At the time of the interview, Shirley had eight years of experience in education and held a master's degree. During the interview, Shirley indicated that the majority of her teaching experience was in pre-kindergarten, and she had one year of experience in third grade.

Claire taught first grade during the 2018-2019 school year. At the time of the interview, Claire had 25 years of experience in education and held a master's degree. During the interview, Claire revealed that she also held National Board Certification.

Cathy taught as a self-contained teacher at the middle school level during the 2018-2019 school year. Cathy had 14 years of experience in education and held a master's degree. Cathy indicated that she had taught special education at all grade levels as well as high school English.

Dennis taught middle and high school social studies during the 2018-2019 school year and had 21 years of experience in education. Dennis held a Bachelor of Arts in History and a Bachelor of Science in Marketing and Management. Dennis taught courses in United States History, World History, Religion, and World Geography.

Emmitt taught Agricultural Science at a Career and Technology Center during the 2018-2019 school year. At the time of the interview, Emmitt had 17 years of experience in education and held a master's degree. Emmitt indicated that he also held educational administration certification and often assisted with administrative duties at the Career and Technology Center.

Shelby served as principal for eighth grade and ninth grade students during the 2018-2019 school year. At the time of the interview, Shelby had 17 years of experience in education and held a Ph.D. degree.

Rebecca served as principal for seventh through twelfth grade students during the 2018-2019 school year. At the time of the interview, Rebecca had 25 years of experience in education

and held a master's degree. Rebecca stated that she had also served as a middle school assistant principal and as an English teacher in the past.

Frank served as assistant principal for ninth through twelfth grade students during the 2018-19 school year. Frank had 14 years of experience and held a master's degree.

Secondary Research Question 1: Classroom Management Strategies

This section of the research findings includes a narrative on participants' voices and experiences relating to classroom management strategies, student achievement, and discipline infractions. The following secondary research questions related to classroom management helped guide the study.

- A. What classroom management strategies do teachers and administrators find most effective for promoting high student achievement?
- B. What classroom management strategies do teachers and administrators find most effective for reducing discipline infractions?

In order to address these secondary research questions, the researcher asked participants to reflect upon their classroom management systems for the 2018-2019 school year and the classroom management strategies that had been the most and least successful for them. For some participants, strategies used during the 2018-2019 school year were the most successful. Administrators described what they considered as effective and non-effective classroom management strategies designed to mitigate discipline infractions.

Shirley described her classroom management for the 2018-2019 school year as a positive or reward-based management system. She used ClassDojo, an app designed to communicate information with parents including positive and negative behaviors. Shirley also used a "ticket system." Shirley stated that she saw more success and increased engagement when she

introduced the ticket system. Students earned tickets by answering questions and by exhibiting positive behaviors. She would bring in a wrapped gift at the beginning of the month, and at the end of the month she would draw a name from the earned tickets to select the student to receive the wrapped box. Shirley stated, “They would try to earn more tickets and do more in the classroom. And they were really engaged to earn those tickets because they wanted whatever was in the box.” Shirley felt that these strategies were very effective. She stated, “My engagement went through the roof. Test scores improved, and behavior was a huge improvement.” Overall, Shirley felt that effective behavior management systems “encouraged more of the positive instead of focusing on the negative.”

Claire described her classroom management strategies for the 2018-2019 school year as very structured with a consequence-based system. Claire stated, “We have a set of classroom rules and then we have a classroom set of procedures that have managed students’ activities.” Claire noted that rules are about behaviors and procedures are more about expectations and how to do things. Claire noted that her students received reminders or prompts, and if behaviors continued, she followed a consequence chart: warnings, time-out, removal of privileges, parent conference. Rewards included stickers, treasure box, high-fives. Claire also mentioned that engagement and providing necessary interventions during academic instruction were the most effective management strategies. Claire stated, “Hands on is the way to go.”

Cathy described her classroom management strategies during the 2018-2019 school year as a visual system. She stated, “My students needed visual supports as in a visual schedule, visual consequences, visual rules, and visual work areas although these strategies were tailored to fit the needs of a self-contained special education class.” Further, Cathy noted that the strategies also worked for students functioning on higher levels. She explained, that for her

students, being able to see each step helped them know what steps to follow for each task and increased the likelihood that they would be able to replicate the task later.

Dennis described his classroom management strategies for the 2018-2019 school year as relationship-based. For Dennis, when students experience mutual respect and feel that the teacher cares about them beyond the class period to which they are assigned, the students perform better academically and behaviorally. Dennis extended the relationship portion well beyond the classroom or even hallways. He stated that some of his best parent and student communications occurred at basketball or football games. Dennis stated, “With improved communication came improved participation in class and improved grades.”

Emmitt described his classroom management strategies for the 2018-2019 school year as relationship-based and expectation-based. As an Agricultural Science teacher, Emmitt had to ensure that students understood expectations for classroom settings, lab settings, mechanical shop settings, and greenhouse settings. Emmitt admitted that in order to participate in his class, students had to go through a screening process, but that did not eliminate all issues. Emmitt stated, “Informing the students up front about expectations as well as natural consequences (there is stuff in the shop that can cut you, burn you, or potentially worse) kept most students on track both academically and behaviorally.”

As an administrator, Shelby described effective classroom managers as those who “continuously go over the expectations with the students and the consequences that go with those expectations.” She also stated that teachers who build relationships with students at the beginning of the semester generally have greater academic success as well as less behavior issues. Shelby noted from her experiences that once that relationship is built, students will be more receptive to correction.

For Rebecca, a combination of engagement and relationship-based classroom management strategies were the most effective strategies for student achievement. Rebecca stated, “If you’re going to engage students, you have to be well-planned, you know, which to me even leads back to that relationship because they know about you. They know your expectations. They know you’re going to respect them. They know that you as a teacher have put time in to prepare this great lesson to keep you engaged.” Rebecca remarked, “From my experiences, engagement and building relationships go hand in hand to promote academic achievement.”

Frank described effective classroom management strategies as responsibilities of classroom teachers and of building administrators. Based on Frank’s experiences, administrators should set some building level expectations, and then allow teachers to customize those to their own styles. Frank stated, “Students want discipline, whether people admit it or not, and they want structure. When you have effective classroom management, you’re going to minimize discipline issues, therefore you’re going to have more success in the classroom.”

Participants also described strategies they felt were ineffective for improving behavior and promoting student achievement. For Shirley, the least effective strategy was using a “color system.” The color system utilizes positive range colors (green, blue, pink, and purple) and negative range colors (yellow, orange, and red). Students received rewards or consequences based upon the color they had earned by the end of the day. Shirley shared the following about her pre-kindergarten class, “The students did not understand that once they went lower, they could work themselves back up. And a lot of times I would see them get frustrated because they thought they had ruined the whole day.”

Cathy also mentioned the color system as an ineffective classroom management strategy for her. Cathy explained that for some students the colors at the warning or consequence levels

(yellow, orange, and red) did not register as negative. Cathy stated, “When yellow is your favorite color, I mean, that’s what you want.” Cathy also described anything relying mostly on verbal warnings or cues as ineffective. Cathy stated, “I used to say, okay, that’s your warning, you know, let’s get it together. Then they would do the same thing and I’d be like, okay, this is your warning. And then the assistant was like, ‘You know, you’ve given them five warnings already.’”

For Dennis, the least effective classroom management strategies were those that were “punishment-based.” Dennis described punishment-based strategies as those that give out consequences without regard for reason of behavior and without teaching alternatives to the behavior. Conversely, Emmitt stated that reward based Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) was the least effective for him because “it creates kind of this false set of expectations for some students. I’ve had children in the past that said ‘I did this’ and I would then inquire but to what degree did you do it? I’ve just never gotten that one to be very effective.”

From the administrator’s perspective, Rebecca stated, “Any classroom management strategy can be ineffective when there is a mismatch or inconsistency. The mismatched part, I think, comes in when maybe they give up their stamina. They’re not being consistent and for some reason they don’t follow through with it.” Similarly, Frank stated that inflexible, school-wide management plans have not been effective in his experience. Frank followed up by saying, “I think teachers should be allowed to customize what fits them the best in their classrooms.”

Emergent Themes Related to Effective Classroom Management Strategies

Table 3 provides a display of participants' summaries from the interviews related to effective classroom management strategies as described by the participants. In addition, the display shows emergent themes reflecting the participants' responses.

Table 3

Emergent Themes Related to Effective Classroom Management Strategies Promoting High Levels of Student Achievement

Participant	Effective Classroom Management Strategies	Emergent Theme
Shirley	Ticket system	Positive Reinforcement
	Prize raffle	
Claire	Academic interventions	Academic Supports
	Hands-on activities	
Cathy	Visual supports	Academic Supports
Dennis	Showing respect to students	Relationships
	Attending student events	
	Communication with parents	
Emmitt	Teaching expectations and consequences	Expectations and Consequences
Shelby	Continuous review of expectations and consequences	Expectations and Consequences
	Building relationships early in the course	Relationships
Rebecca	Planning engaging lessons	Planning
	Relationship building	Relationships
Frank	Building-level expectations	Expectations and Consequences
	Classroom-level expectations	

The participants described several classroom management strategies that, in their experiences, increased student achievement. Strategies included offering prizes, interventions, hands-on activities, visual supports, respecting students, engaging with students and parents through extra-curricular activities, teaching and reviewing expectations and consequences, planning engaging lessons, building relationships, and setting building and classroom level expectations. Based on participants' responses, the following themes emerged: relationships, expectations and consequences, academic supports, positive reinforcement, and planning. Overall emergent themes relating to effective classroom management strategies promoting higher levels of student achievement included academic supports, relationship-based strategies and teaching expectations and consequences.

Table 4 provides a display of summaries from the interviews related to classroom management strategies the participants found effective at reducing discipline. In addition, the display shows emergent themes reflecting the participants' responses.

Table 4

Emergent Themes Related to Effective Classroom Management Strategies Reducing Discipline Infractions

Participant	Effective Classroom Management Strategies	Emergent Theme
Shirley	Ticket system	Positive
	Prize raffle	Reinforcement
	Class Dojo	
Claire	Classroom rules	Expectations and
	Classroom procedures	Consequences
	Reminders and prompts	
	Consequence chart	
	Reward chart	
Cathy	Visual schedule	Behavior Supports
Dennis	Showing students respect	Relationships
	Attending student events	
	Communication with parents	
Emmitt	Teaching expectations and consequences	Expectations and
		Consequences
Shelby	Continuous review of expectations and consequences	Expectations and
		Consequences
	Building relationships early in the course	Relationships
Rebecca	Planning engaging lessons	Planning
	Relationship building	Relationships
Frank	Building-level expectations	Expectations and
	Classroom-level expectations	Consequences

Participants described classroom management strategies they felt were effective at reducing discipline infractions. Strategies included prizes, parent communication, classroom

rules and procedures, rewards and consequences, reminders, prompts, visual schedules, relationship building, planning engaging lessons and setting building and classroom level expectations. Based on participants' responses, the following overall themes emerged: positive reinforcement, behavior supports, relationships, expectations and consequences, and planning.

Table 5 presents overall emergent themes of effective classroom management strategies for improving academic achievement as described by the participants. The table displays strategies and emergent themes from teachers' perspectives and from administrators' perspectives.

Table 5

Overall Emergent Themes Related to Effective Classroom Management Strategies for Improving Academic Achievement

	Effective Classroom Management Strategies	Overall Emergent Theme
Teachers' Perspectives	Ticket system	Positive Reinforcement
	Prize raffle	Academic Supports
	ClassDojo	Relationships
	Academic interventions	Expectations and
	Hands-on Activities	Consequences
	Visual supports	
	Showing students respect	
	Attending student events	
	Communication with parents	
	Teaching expectations and consequences	
Administrators' Perspectives	Continuous review of expectations and consequences	Expectations and Consequences
	Building relationships early in the course	Relationships
	Planning engaging lessons	Planning
	Building-level expectations	
	Classroom-level expectations	

Based on teachers' responses related to increasing students' academic achievement, the following themes emerged: strategies providing positive reinforcement, academic supports, relationships, and opportunities for teaching expectations and consequences as most effective for increasing student achievement. Emergent themes from the administrators' perspective included strategies providing teaching expectations and consequences, relationship building, and proper planning as most effective for increasing student achievement.

Table 6 presents overall emergent themes of effective classroom management strategies for reducing discipline infractions as described by the participants. The table displays strategies and emergent themes from teachers' perspectives and from administrators' perspectives.

Table 6

Overall Emergent Themes Related to Effective Classroom Management Strategies for Reducing Discipline Infractions

	Effective Classroom Management Strategies	Overall Emergent Theme
Teachers' Perspectives	Ticket system Prize raffle ClassDojo Classroom rules Classroom procedures Reminders and prompts Consequence chart Reward chart Visual schedule Showing students respect Attending student events Communication with parents Teaching expectations and consequences	Positive Reinforcement Expectations and Consequences Behavior Supports Relationships
Administrators' Perspectives	Continuous review of expectations and consequences Building relationships early in the course Planning engaging lessons Relationship building Building level expectations Classroom level expectations	Expectations and Consequences Relationships Planning

When describing effective classroom management strategies for reducing discipline infractions, emergent themes from the teachers' perspective included the same strategies as those found effective for increasing student achievement with the addition of behavioral supports. Emergent themes from the administrators' perspective included strategies providing teaching

expectations and consequences, relationship building, and proper planning as most effective for reducing discipline infractions.

Secondary Research Question 2: Professional Development Needs

This section of the research findings includes a narrative on participants' experiences identifying their professional development needs focused on classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student academic achievement. In addition, the section includes the participants responses regarding the most effective professional development delivery types. The following secondary research questions related to classroom management helped guide the study:

- A. How do teachers and administrators describe their professional development experiences related to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student academic achievement?
- B. What do teachers and administrators perceive as their top professional development needs in relation to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student academic achievement?
- C. What professional development delivery types or formats do teachers and administrators find most effective?

The researcher asked participants to reflect upon professional development received within the past five years. Participants also described the effectiveness of that professional development and additional training they would like to receive.

When asked about professional development received within the past five years, Shirley described limited and irrelevant professional development. She received training in the form of a workshop from Mississippi Department of Education regarding pre-kindergarten engagement

and classroom management. She rated that training low for relevance in the pre-kindergarten classroom. When asked about her ability to transfer information from that training to her third-grade placement, Shirley indicated that, just like the younger students, the older students responded well to focusing more on positive behaviors than on correcting “every little thing.” Shirley described the need for professional development in classroom management that considers “various types of children you have in your room, because the same behavior plan is not going to work for every child in the classroom.” Shirley would also like to observe and learn more about flexible seating as a classroom management strategy.

Claire stated that she had received no professional development relating to classroom management over the past five years. When asked about the type of professional development she would like to receive, Claire stated “You know, we use a form of PBIS. I don’t think we implement it correctly. I wish the entire staff and the entire set of administrators were correctly trained in PBIS.” Claire also would like to observe and learn more about flexible grouping.

Cathy described an experience with a combination of workshop and peer coaching. For the workshop, Cathy received no follow-up and felt that it was not relevant at all. She had a better experience with peer coaching. Cathy and the peer coach had to work together and noted the peer coach was in her classroom or at least in the school building every day. Cathy stated, “If I had a question, of course she was there for me. I could text or call or email her anytime.” Cathy expressed interest in professional development regarding consequences and steps to take in the classroom prior to issuing an office referral. Cathy would also like to observe and learn more about centers and grouping within a middle school classroom.

Dennis had also received training in the form of a workshop. Dennis described The Crisis Prevention Institute’s Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training as very effective. Dennis stated that

informal professional development in the form of peer conversations regarding specific situations provided new strategies for him to try in his own classroom. Dennis felt that he and other staff members would benefit from training relating to teaching children from poverty situations. Dennis stated, “You have kids coming in and misbehaving, and you might want to be angry, but then you drive a bus route and you see where they live and where they are coming from.” Dennis would like additional training on developing and improving classroom relationships with students.

Emmitt stated that he had been involved in several different professional development sessions relating to discipline and classroom management. Topics included PBIS, mentoring programs, developing peer mentoring programs, and others that focused on relationship development and feedback. Emmitt rated these trainings as very relevant to his classroom but noted that the majority of professional development was delivered via workshop type sessions without any follow-up. Emmitt would like further professional development in the area of mentoring students. Emmitt stated, “People don’t really understand where the line is of what’s being a true mentor and what’s being too friendly. I think that’s something that needs to be explored a lot more, especially now where mass communication gets involved and people are likely to misinterpret things.” Emmitt would like to observe and learn more about using non-examples, or describing what not to do, when teaching classroom rules and expectations.

As an administrator, Shelby described a couple of different professional development opportunities the teachers in her building had received over the past five years. Teachers had participated in an online Harry Wong classroom management course that allowed teachers to develop a classroom management plan. Some of her teachers were also selected to work with a consultant who coached them through implementation and modeling classroom management

plans. Shelby felt that both forms of professional development were very effective for her teachers. Shelby stated that she would like professional development for herself in the area of using non-verbal cues during instruction and building relationships with students.

Over the past five years at Rebecca's school, teachers had received professional development relating to effective use of block scheduling including using brain breaks and transitioning. Rebecca had not participated in those trainings and did not rate their effectiveness. Rebecca stated that she would like for her teachers to receive training in the area of engagement because she feels there's a difference between engagement and being busy. Rebecca stated, "Somewhere along the way, the kids need to know that you're passionate about what you're teaching. You're not that teacher that's just, 'Oh, I'm here for this block.'" Rebecca felt when teachers show their passion and dedication to planning and creating effective lessons, students become more engaged with the lesson.

Frank stated that over the past five years, teachers at his school had received very little professional development relating to classroom management and discipline. As far as the administrators in Frank's school, discipline and management related professional development usually came in the form of seminars relating to students receiving special education services. These seminars usually addressed needs relating to specific students and were not relevant to the majority of students. Frank felt that the teachers in his building would benefit from training in planning bell-to-bell engagement and feedback procedures. Frank noticed that a majority of office referrals were for behaviors that were occurring either within the first ten or the last ten minutes of class. Frank stated, "That tells me that there's no structure; there's too much downtime. So, I think if there were better planning, it would increase achievement across the board and also decrease discipline."

In order to address the secondary research question related to effective types of professional development, the researcher asked participants to identify formats/types from their experiences. The participants expressed their preferred methods they deemed most effective.

Overall, the participants identified face-to-face as a preferred method of professional development. Claire, Cathy, Dennis, Shelby, Rebecca, and Frank included face-to-face formats in their answers. Only Shelby chose face-to-face as a single most preferred method of professional development. Frank stated, “One benefit of face-to-face professional development was that they pull you in groups where you start doing different activities about the topic; it makes people get involved.”

The next most common preferred method of professional development was peer coaching. Shirley, Claire, Cathy, and Emmitt listed peer coaching as being a personal preference. Emmitt added,

Peer coaching is something that I’ve come to believe in a lot partly due to our state Future Farmers of America Association. I’ve been involved in training a lot of student teachers, and we have a mentor program in place for those first-year teachers where they are paired up with somebody. It’s kinda been a thing that, especially since I completed grad school, that I’ve come to believe in.

Participants identified peer observations equally as often as peer coaching. Shirley, Claire, Cathy, and Dennis all included peer observations in in their lists of preferred professional development methods. Dennis who had previously served as an inclusion teacher stated, “I was with a teacher’s class working with students in the classroom. That helped me a lot because I learned something from two of those teachers that I use today.”

The least identified forms of professional development included online delivery and “topic based.” Dennis and Rebecca both identified online delivery as personally effective. Rebecca added, “I can do the technology. I’m good with it. Sometimes face-to-face is not as effective. I don’t want to get sidetracked and can, depending on the makeup of the room.” Frank included topic based in his list. For him, the method of delivery didn’t matter as much as the relevance of the information being presented.

Emergent Themes Related to Professional Development Needs for Effective Classroom Management

Table 7 provides a display of summaries from the interviews related to professional development experiences within the last five years focused on effective classroom management as described by the participants. In addition, the display shows emergent themes reflecting the participants’ responses.

Table 7

*Emergent Themes Related to Past Professional Development for Effective Classroom**Management Promoting High Student Achievement and Reducing Discipline Infractions*

Participant	Professional Development Experiences	Emergent Theme
Shirley	Workshop without follow-up: PreK Engagement and Classroom Management (Not relevant)	Content not Relevant Workshop Without Follow-up Engagement Classroom Management
Claire	No classroom management professional development within past 5 years	No professional development
Cathy	Workshop without follow-up (Not relevant) Peer coaching with frequent follow-up (Very relevant)	Content not relevant Workshop Without Follow-up Relevant Content Peer Learning with Follow-up
Dennis	Workshop: Crisis Intervention with annual follow-up (Relevant) Peer conversations (Relevant)	Relevant Content Workshop with Follow-up Peer Learning Crisis Intervention
Emmitt	Workshop without follow-up: PBIS, mentoring programs, developing peer mentoring programs, providing feedback (Very relevant)	Relevant Content Workshop Without Follow-up PBIS Mentoring Providing Feedback
Shelby	Online: Harry Wong Classroom Management Course (Very Relevant) Consultant/Coaching: Classroom management plans and implementation (Very Relevant)	Online Coaching with Follow-up Classroom Management Plans
Rebecca	Workshop without follow-up: Effective use of block scheduling with brain breaks and transitioning	Workshop without Follow-up Brain Breaks Transitioning
Frank	Seminar without follow-up: Students with Special Education Services (Not relevant)	Workshop without Follow-up Content not Relevant Special Education

In general, while one participant stated that she had not received any professional development relating to classroom management within the past five years, the other participants

identified participation in a workshop as the most common method of professional development delivery. Other emergent themes included peer coaching, informal peer conversations, and online delivery. Out of ten described professional development experiences, participants indicated seven did not include any form of follow-up and three included follow-ups at least annually.

Emergent themes associated with the content of the professional development participants had experienced included the following: engagement, crisis intervention, mentoring, providing feedback, classroom management plans, brain breaks, transitioning, and special education. Of ten professional development experiences presented, participants indicated six were relevant to their current positions and four were not relevant to their current positions.

Table 8 provides a display of summaries from the interviews related to professional development needs for effective classroom management as described by the participants. In addition, the display shows emergent themes reflecting the participants' responses.

Table 8

Emergent Themes Related to Professional Development Needs for Effective Classroom Management Promoting High Student Achievement and Reducing Discipline Infractions

Participant	Professional Development Needs	Emergent Themes
Shirley	Differentiated Classroom Management	Behavior Supports
	Behavior plans	Seating
	Flexible seating	
Claire	More in-depth PBIS training	PBIS
	Flexible Grouping	Grouping
Cathy	Consequences and steps to take prior to office referral	Classroom Management Plans
	Centers and grouping in middle school	Grouping
	Teaching children from poverty situations	Poverty
Dennis	Developing and improving classroom relationships with students	Relationships
Emmitt	Mentoring students	Relationships
	Using non-examples to teach expectations	Teaching Expectations
Shelby	Using non-verbal cues during instruction	Behavior Supports
	Building relationships with students	Relationships
Rebecca	Student engagement	Engagement
Frank	Planning for bell-to-bell instruction	Planning
	Student engagement	Engagement
	Feedback	Feedback

Participants described professional development needs relating to classroom management for themselves or their current colleagues. Participants identified ten emergent themes: behavior supports, seating and grouping, PBIS, classroom management plans, poverty, relationships, teaching expectations, engagement, planning, and feedback. Out of these themes, participants

identified relationships (three participants) most often. Behavior supports, grouping, and engagement were identified by two participants each. The remaining themes were identified by one participant each.

Table 9 provides a display of summaries from the interviews related to the preferred types and formats of professional development identified by the participants. The display shows emergent themes reflecting the participants' responses.

Table 9

Emergent Themes Related to Preferred Professional Development Types/Formats for Effective Classroom Management Promoting High Student Achievement and Reducing Discipline Infractions

Participant	Preferred Professional Development Types/Formats	Emergent Theme
Shirley	Peer coaching/observations	Peer Learning
Claire	Face-to-face/workshops	Face-to-Face
	Peer coaching/observations	Peer Learning
Cathy	Face-to-face/workshops	Face-to-Face
	Peer coaching/observations	Peer Learning
Dennis	Face-to-face/workshops	Face-to-Face
	Peer coaching/observations	Peer Learning
	Online	Online
Emmitt	Peer coaching/observations	Peer Learning
Shelby	Face-to-face/workshops	Face-to-Face
Rebecca	Face-to-face/workshops	Face-to-Face
	Online	Online
Frank	Face-to-face	Face-to-Face
	Topic based	Topic Based

When identifying preferences for professional development delivery methods, participants identified four distinct types: peer learning, face to face, online, and topic based. Participants identified peer learning and face to face delivery as preferred methods most often (five participants each). Two participants identified online delivery as a preferred method. Frank stated that the delivery method did not matter to him as long as he found the topic relevant to his current position and need.

Table 10 presents an overall summary of professional development experiences relating to classroom management as described by the participants. The table displays experiences and emergent themes from teachers' perspectives and from administrators' perspectives.

Table 10

Overall Emergent Themes Related to Participants' Past Classroom Management Professional Development Experiences Including Content and Format

	Professional Development Experiences	Overall Emergent Theme
Teachers' Perspectives	No classroom management professional development within past 5 years	No Professional Development
	Workshop without follow-up	Content not Relevant
	Workshop with annual follow-up	Relevant Content
	Peer coaching with frequent follow-up (Very relevant)	Workshop Without Follow-up
	Peer conversations (Relevant)	Workshop with Follow-up
	PreK Engagement and Classroom Management (Not relevant)	Peer Learning with Follow-up
	Crisis Intervention (Relevant)	Engagement
	PBIS (Very relevant)	Classroom Management
	Mentoring programs (Very relevant)	PBIS
	Developing peer mentoring programs (Very relevant)	Mentoring
	Providing feedback (Very relevant)	Providing Feedback
Administrators' Perspectives	Online	Relevant Content
	Consultant/Coaching	Content Not Relevant
	Workshop without follow-up	Online
	Seminar without follow-up	Coaching with Follow-up
	Harry Wong Classroom Management (Very relevant)	Workshop Without Follow-up
	Classroom management plans and implementation (Very relevant)	Classroom Management
	Effective use of block scheduling with brain breaks and transitions	Brain Breaks
	Special Education Services (Not relevant)	Transitioning Special Education

Teachers and administrators described similar experiences with professional development focused on classroom management. Based on teachers' responses, the following themes related to format or type emerged: workshops without follow-up sessions, workshops with follow-up sessions, and absence of professional development. Administrators experienced workshops without follow-up sessions, but they also received online training and coaching with follow-up sessions.

Table 11 presents an overall summary of professional development needs relating to classroom management as described by the participants. The table displays needs and emergent themes from teachers' perspectives and from administrators' perspectives.

Table 11

Overall Emergent Themes Related to Professional Development Needs for Effective Classroom Management Strategies Promoting High Student Achievement and Reducing Discipline Infractions

	Professional Development Needs for Effective Classroom Management Strategies	Overall Emergent Theme
Teachers' Perspectives	Differentiated classroom management	Behavior Supports
	Behavior plans	Seating
	Flexible Seating	Grouping
	Grouping	PBIS
	More in-depth PBIS training	Classroom Management Plans
	Consequences and steps to take prior to office referral	Poverty
	Centers and grouping in the middle school	Relationships
	Teaching children from poverty situations	Teaching Expectations
	Developing and improving classroom relationships with students	
Administrators' Perspectives	Using non-verbal cues during instruction	Behavior Supports
	Building relationships with students	Relationships
	Student engagement	Engagement
	Planning for bell-to-bell instruction	Planning
	Feedback	Feedback

When asked to consider professional development needs, teachers and administrators identified comparable themes. Both teachers and administrators identified behavior supports and relationships as professional development needs for themselves or others in their schools.

Teachers identified seating/grouping, PBIS, classroom management plans, poverty, and methods of teaching expectations as content of professional development needs. Additional emergent themes from the administrators' responses included engagement, planning, and providing meaningful feedback.

Table 12 presents an overall summary of professional development preferences as described by the participants. The table displays preferred methods of professional development delivery and emergent themes from teachers' perspectives and from administrators' perspectives

Table 12

Overall Emergent Themes Related to Preferred Professional Development Types/Formats for Effective Classroom Management Promoting High Student Achievement and Reducing Discipline Infractions

	Preferred Professional Development Types/Formats	Overall Emerging Theme
Teachers' Perspectives	Peer coaching/observations	Peer Learning
	Face-to-face/workshops	Face-to-Face
	Online	Online
Administrators' Perspectives	Face-to-face/workshops	Face-to-Face
	Online	Online
	Topic based	Topic Based

As teachers and administrators reflected upon themselves as learners, common themes between both groups included face to face and online delivery as preferences for obtaining professional development. Teachers also identified peer coaching and observation as preferred methods of professional development.

Secondary Research Question 3: The Role of the Administrator

This section of the research findings includes a narrative on the participants' experiences and understanding regarding the role of the principal in classroom management and reducing discipline infractions. The following secondary research questions related to the role of the principal helped guide the study.

- A. What is the role of the administrator in terms of positive classroom management strategies to reduce discipline infractions?
- B. What is the role of the administrator in professional development in relation to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions?

In order to address the secondary research questions, the researcher asked participants to describe the role of the principal in terms of classroom management in relation to reducing discipline infractions. Participants also discussed the effectiveness of their principals or administrators during the 2018-2019 school year.

Shirley described the role of administrators in dealing with classroom management and discipline as being a last resort. Shirley stated, "The majority of disciplinary issues can be handled within the classroom, and it's the teacher's job to manage those behaviors." Shirley added, "There are times when you've done everything you know to do and your hands are tied. So that's when I feel like you should go to the principal, when there's nothing else you can do as the teacher." When asked about the effectiveness of the administrators in her building during the 2018-2019 school year, Shirley felt they were very effective. Shirley acknowledged that sometimes the administrators get behind and it may take a couple of days for them to get to an issue, but once they address the issue, they are really good with following up and making sure

that whatever they talked about or the plan that they had with that student is being fulfilled and the student is doing better.

According to Claire, an administrator should be a mentor, facilitator, and problem solver. Claire stated, “Administrators just need to give tools to the teachers to solve problems. I don’t really think it’s their job to constantly monitor classrooms.” Claire rated her administrators as moderately effective during the 2018-2019 school year.

Cathy outlined the role of an administrator as maintaining fairness and consistency while investigating issues and developing relationships with students and teachers. Cathy felt that when a student was brought to the office, administrators applied appropriate consequences based on all of the facts. Often her administrators would speak with the students, the teachers, and the parents before determining any necessary consequences. Cathy also reported that by the time students were in eighth grade, administrators had developed relationships with the students and could hold conferences instead of using exclusionary discipline practices. Cathy felt that her administrators were very effective at handling student discipline issues.

Dennis agreed with Shirley that the administrator should be a last resort within the process of addressing student discipline issues. Dennis added, “When it gets to the point that what I have done does not work, then I’m taking it to the administrator.” Dennis articulated that it was the classroom teacher’s job to do everything they can to manage behavior within the classroom before taking things to the office. Dennis stated that his administrators were very effective in their role as well as getting parents involved when necessary.

Emmitt also felt that teachers tend to turn to administrators as the final step in their classroom management plans. In the career technical center setting, students who show repetitive behavioral issues can be removed from those programs. Emmitt stated that the majority of issues

are handled in the classroom and are resolved before needing to be sent to the administrator.

Emmitt added, “There’s a little bit of an intimidation factor there because most of the students realize if I make it in that office, it’s not going to be good.” Emmitt rated his administrator as highly effective for the 2018-2019 school year.

Shelby described the role of the administrator as a supportive one. She stated, “I feel it’s my job and responsibility as an administrator to support the teachers when it comes to classroom management. And I do that by being visible in the classroom.” Shelby felt that the more she was able to get into the classroom and observe instructional practices, classroom arrangements, and management systems in action, the better equipped she was to help with any issues that would arise. Shelby rated the administrative team in her building as very effective during the 2018-2019 school year.

As an administrator, Rebecca described the role of the administrator as setting the tone and being consistent. Rebecca added, “In order to be consistent, you do have to be out there and just kind of stay on top of things.” Rebecca noted that being consistent did not always mean zero-tolerance and that administrators often must make decisions on a case-by-case basis. Rebecca said, “Developing relationships with teachers and students was important.” Further, Rebecca stated that she did not want teachers to think she was always on the student’s side or vice versa. Rebecca rated the administrative team in her building as moderately effective during the 2018-2019 school year.

For Frank, being an effective administrator, as related to classroom management and discipline, meant that the administrator should be in classrooms on a regular basis. Frank explained it this way, “It’s hard to pull in Jane Doe and tell her she is writing referral after referral, and that I get at least five a day from her when you have never been in the classroom to

see kind of what is going on.” Frank also felt teachers knew just as much or more about classroom management as he did, and he relied on teachers to handle as much classroom discipline as possible. When students were sent to Frank, he felt his job was to be fair and consistent. Although he was a part of the administrative team, Frank rated the administrative team in his building as not effective during the 2018-2019 school year.

Participants also had an opportunity to describe the role of the principal in terms of providing professional development and classroom management for reducing discipline infractions. The following section includes a narrative from the data collected during the interviews.

Shirley shared during the interview that administrators have a major role in providing professional development to teachers in areas relating to classroom management. Shirley stated, “Administrators kind of set the tone for the school. So, if they’re not picking professional developments that help with classroom management and discipline, then the school is going to be chaotic.” While Shirley rated the administrators in her building as moderately effective during the 2018-2019 school year, she thought that more professional development was needed to strengthen classroom management. Shirley also stated that the district prescribed a lot of the professional development offerings. For her, administrators should also review where issues and weaknesses appear and obtain professional development based on those areas.

Claire described the administrator’s role in providing professional development as providing targeted supports. Claire felt that administrators should “monitor infractions, gather their data on the infractions and then plan professional development individually for teachers in target areas.” Claire felt that blanket professional development for all teachers on a particular

topic was not effective. Claire rated the administrators in her building as somewhat effective at providing appropriate professional development during the 2018-2019 school year.

Cathy stated that the administrators in her building had done an effective job at finding and providing professional development on academic topics, but not on classroom management or discipline related topics. She was unsure what the role of the building level administrator should be for providing professional development and stated that in her district, central office generally prescribes and provides professional development opportunities.

Dennis had similar responses. In his opinion, his administrators did a good job at informing staff about student issues when they occurred. He did not know of any professional development that building level administrators requested or provided.

Emmitt was in a unique setting during the 2018-2019 school year. Although he taught in a career and technology center with its own director, much of the professional development and teacher expectations were tied to those prescribed by the high school. Teachers in the career and technology center were expected to utilize whatever behavior management system the high school teachers were using to maintain consistency. Emmitt stated that the director did have some leeway in providing additional professional development based upon specific needs of programs like equipment use and overall safety expectations. Emmitt felt that the director was very effective at providing appropriate additional professional development during the 2018-2019 school year.

Shelby reinforced the importance of being in the classroom. By being present to see classroom management plans in action, she was able to identify professional development needs and provide them on a targeted basis. Shelby felt that professional development opportunities at her school were effective because they were targeted to specific teacher needs.

Rebecca felt that administrators should be advocates for professional development needed in their buildings. In her district, resources for professional development were handled outside of the building. Rebecca added, “It is up to me to present the need to where the resource well is. I’ve never felt like I couldn’t ask for something and a decent effort was made to provide it.” Rebecca rated the administrative team in her building as very effective for the 2018-2019 school year.

Frank described the role of the administrator as providing input into finding professional development opportunities based on perceived needs within the building. For his building, Frank felt that teachers needed more training in planning engaging instruction. Frank was able to relay that need to the administrative team. Although he left the position at the end of the 2018-2019 school year and did not know if training had been planned or provided, he felt that his input was taken seriously.

Emergent Themes Related to the Role of the Administrator

Table 13 provides a display of summaries from the interviews related to the role of the administrator related to positive classroom management strategies as described by the participants. In addition, the display shows emergent themes reflecting the participants’ responses.

Table 13

*Emergent Themes Related to the Role of the Administrator Focused on Positive Classroom**Management Strategies to Reduce Discipline Infractions*

Participant	Role of Administrator Focused on Positive Classroom Management Strategies	Emergent Theme
Shirley	Take over the situation when teacher attempts have failed	Support Teachers
Claire	Mentor Facilitator Problem solver	Support Teachers
Cathy	Maintain Consistency Investigate issues Develop relationships with teachers and students	Consistency Fairness Relationships
Dennis	Handle situations after teachers have tried everything	Support Teachers
Emmitt	Last step of classroom management plan	Support Teachers
Shelby	Support teachers Be visible in classrooms	Support Teachers Classroom Presence
Rebecca	Set the tone Maintain consistency Develop relationships with teachers and students	Consistency Relationships
Frank	Be in classrooms Be fair and consistent	Classroom Presence Consistency Fairness

Overall, participants described the role of the administrator relating to classroom management as providing support to teachers. Other emergent themes identified by participants included the need for administrators to provide consistency and fairness when handling situations, developing relationships with teachers and students, and being present in classrooms.

Table 14 provides a display of summaries from the interviews related to the role of the administrator related to professional development focused on classroom management for reducing discipline infractions as described by the participants. In addition, the display shows emergent themes reflecting the participants' responses

Table 14

Emergent Themes Related to the Role of the Administrator Related to Professional Development Focused on Classroom Management for Reducing Discipline Infractions

Participant	Role of Administrator Related to Professional Development Focused on Classroom Management	Emergent Theme
Shirley	Review data and issues Select appropriate professional development	Data-Based Professional Development
Claire	Review data Provide targeted supports (not blanketed)	Data-Based Professional Development Targeted Supports
Cathy	Unsure of the role of the administrator Central office prescribes professional development	Follow Central Office Plan
Dennis	Unsure if building level administrator or central office staff choose professional development	Follow Central Office Plan
Emmitt	Select professional development based upon specific needs of programs/subject areas	Data-Based Professional Development
Shelby	Observe classrooms Provide targeted professional development	Data-Based Professional Development Targeted Supports
Rebecca	Advocate for professional development needs	Data-Based Professional Development
Frank	Provide input into selecting professional development based on needs	Data-Based Professional Development

Participants described the role of the administrator related to providing professional development focused on classroom management for reducing discipline infractions. Two participants indicated they were unsure of the role of their administrators. They both indicated that professional development opportunities generally came from the district level. The majority of other participants' responses included emergent themes of providing data based professional development. Participants also indicated that professional development opportunities should be targeted towards the staff who need the professional development.

Table 15 presents an overall summary of the role of the administrator related to positive classroom management strategies to reduce discipline infractions. The table also displays overall emergent themes from teachers' perspectives and administrators' perspectives.

Table 15

Overall Emergent Themes Related to the Role of the Administrator in Terms of Positive Classroom Management Strategies to Reduce Discipline Infractions

	Role of the Administrator Related to Classroom Management	Overall Emergent Theme
Teachers' Perspectives	Take over the situation when teacher attempts have failed Mentor Facilitator Problem solver Maintain consistency Investigate issues Develop relationships with teachers and students Last step of classroom management plan	Support Teachers Consistency Fairness Relationships
Administrators' Perspectives	Support teachers Be visible in classrooms Set the tone Be fair and consistent Develop relationships with teachers and students	Support Teachers Classroom Presence Consistency Relationships Fairness

Overall, teachers and administrators agreed about the role of the administrator in strategies for positive classroom management designed for reducing discipline infractions. and providing professional development focused on classroom management. From both the teachers' perspectives and administrators' perspectives about the role of the administrator in classroom management, the following themes emerged: support teachers, providing consistency and fairness and developing relationships. Administrators also described classroom presence as a part of the role of the administrator in classroom management.

Table 16 presents an overall summary of the role of the administrator related to professional development focused on classroom management. The table also displays overall emergent themes from teachers' perspectives and from administrators' perspectives.

Table 16

Overall Emergent Themes Related to the Role of the Administrator in Professional Development in Relation to Classroom Management for Reducing Discipline Infractions

	Role of the Administrator Related to Professional Development	Overall Emergent Theme
Teachers' Perspectives	Review data and issues	Data-Based Professional Development
	Select appropriate professional development based on data and need	Targeted Supports
	Provide targeted supports	Follow Central Office Plan
	Unsure if central office or building level administrators select professional development	
Administrators' Perspectives	Observe classrooms	Data-Based Professional Development
	Provide targeted professional development based on need	Targeted Supports
	Advocate for professional development needs	
	Provide input to those who select professional development based on building needs	

From teachers' experiences and administrators' experiences about the role of the administrator in providing professional development focused on classroom management, the following themes emerged: data based professional development and providing targeted

supports. Two teacher participants stated they were unsure of the role of the administrator in providing professional development.

Secondary Research Question 4: Policy

This section of the research findings includes a narrative on participants' responses related to their experiences with discipline policies. The following secondary research questions related to policy helped guide the study.

- A. What policy changes do administrators and teachers recommend related to positive classroom management for reducing discipline infractions?
- B. What policy changes do administrators and teachers recommend related to professional development focused on classroom management for promoting student academic achievement?

When asked about school and district discipline policies, Shirley felt that current policies were not effective. Shirley stated, "There's a lot of repeat offenders, and I think sometimes at the district level, it kind of gets swept under the rug." Shirley felt that bringing back or enforcing rules related to tardies leading to absences would help reduce discipline infractions. Shirley added, "Usually the students who drag in at eight thirty or nine o'clock in the morning are the ones you have trouble with because they disrupt what is already going on in the classroom." In addition, Shirley felt that requiring teachers new to the district with less than ten years of teaching experience to go through additional classroom management professional development would help improve student achievement.

Claire had a similar opinion about the effectiveness of current policies aimed at reducing discipline infractions. Claire stated, "What we need is there in black and white, but what we lack is enforcement." Claire added that discipline issues had the potential to get political in her

school. Claire noted, “Parents go in behind closed doors with administrators, even up through the central office, and they make deals. If we do this--can you do that.” Claire indicated that she would like to see a stronger parental involvement policy. Claire felt that increased parental involvement, even if not physically involved at the school building level, would decrease student discipline issues and increase student achievement.

Cathy stated that related policies as written were effective. To Cathy, the overall effectiveness depended on how the administrator applied written policies. Cathy stated she had experiences where the administrator was fair and consistent with discipline policies and experiences in other schools where consequences depended on who the student was more than the offense. Cathy did not have any additions or changes to recommend to current policies. Cathy suggested it was ultimately up to central office staff to follow-up with building level administrators to make sure policies were followed before recommending expulsion or alternative school consequences for students.

Dennis felt that written policies were very effective in his school. Dennis stated that policies were effective because students know where they stand, know the expectations, and know the consequences. Dennis suggested that central office staff should review and assess the policies related to cell phones. Many teachers and schools allow students to use cell phones as tools and policies should be written to reflect appropriate use of cell phones in classes.

Emmitt described the current discipline-related policies as “effective as written.” Dennis also described problems that “come in when policies are not always enforced equally and appropriately when it comes to certain situations.” Emmitt stated that dealing with students made it complicated to administer different consequences based upon circumstances because those students only saw offenses and consequences. Emmitt did not provide any recommendations for

additions or changes to current policies. However, Emmitt stated, “If teachers could see a little bit more of behind the scenes on the administrative side, then teachers would have a better understanding about what goes into decisions and what helps teachers to be more proactive before writing office referrals.”

Shelby discussed current discipline-related policies at her school and indicated policies were effective at reducing discipline infractions. Shelby stated that her school went one step further than written district policies for students who were habitually tardy. Shelby found it difficult to speak about policies. Shelby stated, “It is hard to consider any changes to policies due to all of the unknown situations that schools would be faced with upon returning to school following school closures due to COVID-19.

Rebecca rated the current policies at her school as being moderately effective. Rebecca described the current cell phone policy as “necessary, but stated, “It’s tedious.” Rebecca also had a similar issue with the school’s dress code policy. Overall, Rebecca felt that policies were very effective dealing with violent offenses, but needed adjustment and refinement for non-violent offenses, and other classroom offenses. As an administrator, Rebecca made it known that she appreciated the broadness of the district level policies. Rebecca was confident in suggesting that policies covering consequences and procedures that worked in her current building would not have worked as well in a different school within the same district.

Frank rated current policies in his school as not effective at all. Where Rebecca appreciated the broadness of K-12 district level policies, Frank did not. Frank felt that in order to maintain fairness and consistency, each school should have a separate handbook. Frank also suggested adding specific PBIS system policies.

Emergent Themes Related to Classroom Management Policy Recommendations

Table 17 provides a display of summaries from the interviews related to current policies related to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions. In addition, the display shows emergent themes reflecting the participants' responses.

Table 17

Emergent Themes for Recommended Policy Changes Related to Positive Classroom Management for Reducing Discipline Infractions

Participant	Recommended Policy Changes Related to Positive Classroom Management for Reducing Discipline Infractions	Emergent Theme
Shirley	Enforce current rules related to tardiness	Increase Consistency
Claire	Stronger parental involvement policy	Parental Involvement
Cathy	Consistently follow current policies	Increase Consistency
Dennis	Review and assess cell phone policies	Adjust Non-Violent Offense Policies
Emmitt	Allow teachers to see behind the scenes of administrator decisions on discipline issues	Include Teachers in Administrative Processes
Shelby	No recommended changes due to uncertainty of COVID-19	No Recommended Changes
Rebecca	Refinement of policies for non-violent and classroom offenses	Adjust Non-Violent Offense Policies
Frank	Separate policy and handbook for different grade levels	Policies Based on Grade Level
	Specific PBIS policies	PBIS Policies

Participants provided suggested changes to current policies related to positive classroom management focused on reducing discipline infractions. The most common themes included increasing consistency of current policies, adjusting policies for non-violent offenses, and no

policy changes at all. Other themes identified included increasing parental involvement, PBIS policies, including teachers in administrative processes, and separate policies for specific grade levels.

Table 18 provides a display of summaries from the interviews related to recommended policy changes related to professional development focused on classroom management for promoting student academic achievement. In addition, the display shows emergent themes reflecting the participants' responses.

Table 18

*Emergent Themes for Recommended Policy Changes Related to Professional Development**Focused on Classroom Management for Promoting Student Academic Achievement*

Participant	Recommended Policy Changes Related to Professional Development Focused on Classroom Management for Promoting Student Academic Achievement	Emergent Themes
Shirley	Require classroom management professional development for new teachers	Professional Development for New Teachers
Claire	No recommended changes	No Policy Changes
Cathy	Consistently follow current policies	Increase Consistency
Dennis	No recommended changes	No Policy Changes
Emmitt	Allow teachers to see behind the scenes of administrator decisions on discipline issues	Include Teachers in Administrative Processes
Shelby	No recommended changes due to uncertainty of COVID-19	No Policy Changes
Rebecca	No recommended changes	No Policy Changes
Frank	Additional PBIS training	PBIS

While half of participants did not recommend any changes to policies related to professional development focused on classroom management for promoting student academic achievement, the other half suggested several changes. Recommended changes to professional development policy included increased professional development in classroom management for

new teachers, an increase in consistency in following current policies, include teachers in administrative processes, and increased professional development about PBIS.

Table 19 presents an overall summary of recommended policy changes related to positive classroom management strategies for reducing discipline infractions from teachers' perspectives and administrators' perspectives. The table also displays overall emergent themes from teachers' perspectives and administrators' perspectives.

Table 19

Overall Emergent Themes for Recommended Policy Changes Focused on Positive Classroom Management Strategies for Reducing Discipline Infractions

	Recommended Policy Changes Relating to Classroom Management Strategies for Reducing Discipline Infractions	Overall Emergent Theme
Teachers' Perspectives	Enforce current rules related to tardiness	Increase Consistency
	Stronger parental involvement policy	Parental Involvement
	Consistently follow current policies	Adjust Non-Violent Offense Policies
	Review and assess cell phone policies	Include Teachers in Administrative Processes
	Allow teachers to see behind the scenes of administrator decisions on discipline issues	
Administrators' Perspectives	No recommended changes due to uncertainty of COVID-19	No Recommended Changes
	Refinement of policies for non-violent and classroom offenses	Adjust Non-Violent Offense Policies
	Separate policy and handbook for different grade levels	Policies Based on Grade Level
	Specific PBIS policies	PBIS Policies

Teachers and administrators recommended several changes to policies related to classroom management strategies for reducing discipline infractions. A common emergent theme for teachers and administrators included adjusting policies for non-violent or classroom offenses. Other overall emergent themes from the teachers' perspective included increasing the consistency of application of current policies, strengthening parental involvement policies, and including teachers in some administrative processes. Additional emergent themes from the administrators' perspective included no recommended changes, policies based upon grade levels, and specific policies for PBIS.

Table 20 presents an overall summary of recommended policy changes for professional development focused on classroom management for promoting student academic achievement from the teachers' perspective and administrators' perspective. The table also displays overall emergent themes from the teachers' perspective and administrators' perspective.

Table 20

Overall Emergent Themes for Recommended Policy Changes Related to Professional Development Focused on Classroom Management for Promoting Student Academic Achievement

	Recommended Policy Changes Related to Professional Development Focused on Classroom Management Promoting Student Academic Achievement	Overall Emergent Theme
Teachers' Perspectives	No recommended changes	No Policy Changes
	Require classroom management professional development for new teachers	Professional Development for New Teachers
	Consistently follow current policies	Increase Consistency
	Allow teachers to see behind the scenes of administrator decisions on discipline issues	Include Teachers in Administrative Processes
Administrators' Perspectives	No recommended changes due to uncertainty of COVID-19	No Policy Changes
	No recommended changes Additional PBIS Training	PBIS

Teachers and administrators recommended a few changes to professional development policies relating to classroom management strategies for promoting student achievement. Overall emergent themes from the teachers' perspective included no policy changes, additional professional development for new teachers, increase consistency in following current professional development policies, and including teachers in administrative processes. Overall emergent themes from the administrators' perspective included no changes and additional training in PBIS.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative phenomenological research study examined the lived experiences and recommendations of teachers and administrators related to positive classroom management strategies, professional development needs, role of the principal/school leader, and recommendations for policy changes within the context of the public school. Overall emergent themes were generated for each of the four areas from the analysis of the responses from the teachers and administrators.

In terms of strategies for positive classroom management, teachers and administrators provided similar recommendations for improving academic achievement and reducing discipline infractions. Emergent themes from the teachers' perspective included positive reinforcement, academic supports, behavior supports, relationships, and teaching expectations and consequences. Emergent themes from the administrators' perspective included teaching expectations and consequences, relationships, and planning.

Professional development needs outlined by teachers included providing behavior supports, seating, grouping, PBIS, creating and implementing classroom management plans, teaching children from poverty situations, developing classroom relationships with students, and teaching expectations. Professional development needs outlined by administrators included providing behavior supports, developing relationships with students, student engagement, planning, and providing feedback. When participants reflected on preferences for professional development types or formats, emergent themes included peer learning, face-to-face sessions or workshops, online learning, and topic-based learning.

Participants described the role of administrator in relation to positive classroom management strategies to reduce discipline infractions and professional development in relation

to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions. From the teachers' perspective, the role of the administrator in relation to positive classroom management strategies included supporting teachers, maintaining consistency and fairness, and developing relationships with teachers and students. Administrators described the same themes with the addition of maintaining a presence in classrooms. Teachers described the role of the administrator in providing professional development relating to classroom management as providing data-based professional development, providing targeted supports, and following the professional development plan developed by the district office. Administrators also identified providing data-based professional development and targeted supports as part of their role in professional development.

Recommendations for policy changes from the teachers' perspective included increased consistency, stronger parental involvement policies, adjustments to non-violent offenses, classroom management professional development for new teachers, and including teachers in administrative processes. Administrators recommended adjustments to policies for non-violent offenses, policies based upon grade levels, and more detailed PBIS policies.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the results of the study, a discussion of major findings, limitations, recommendations for practitioners and policymakers, and recommendations for future research. This qualitative phenomenological study examined the lived experiences and recommendations of teachers and administrators related to classroom management strategies, professional development needs, role of the principal/school leadership related to classroom management, and recommendations for policy changes within the context of the public school. The following was the overarching research question for the study: How do teachers and administrators describe strategies for decreasing discipline infractions, their professional development needs related to effective classroom management, the role of the administrator in promoting effective classroom management, and recommendations for related policy changes?

Summary

The study used a phenomenological research approach to identify professional development needs of teachers and administrators for promoting and providing effective classroom management strategies in order to reduce instances of discipline infractions. The study also sought to determine effective classroom management strategies for addressing discipline infractions. Other goals of the study were to describe the role of the principal in promoting effective classroom management strategies, reduce discipline infractions, and provide recommendations for related school policies. Through analysis of participants' responses to

semi-structured interviews, emergent themes were found from the perspective of both teachers and administrators. Participants of the study included teachers and administrators employed by public schools in Mississippi during the 2018-2019 school year.

This study's findings were guided by the primary and secondary research questions and were presented in four sections organized based on the secondary research questions. The findings included effective classroom management strategies; professional development experiences, needs, and preferences; the role of the administrator; and reflections on current policy and recommended changes. For the most part, the findings were consistent with previous literature regarding classroom management, professional development, the role of the administrator, and school policy.

Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 1: Effective Classroom Management Strategies

This study asked participants to reflect upon their experiences relating to classroom management strategies, student achievement, and discipline. The emergent themes relating to effective classroom management strategies included positive reinforcement, academic supports, behavior supports, relationships, teaching expectations and consequences, and planning. Three participants, one teacher and two administrators, rated teaching expectations and consequences as an effective classroom management strategy. One participant stated that having and teaching building level and classroom level expectations reduced discipline infractions. Three participants, one teacher and two administrators, also stated that relationship building was key to effective classroom management. One participant stressed the importance of building relationships early in the course. Two teachers stated that academic and behavioral supports improve classroom management effectiveness. One participant specifically mentioned that using

visual supports and schedules within her classroom limited disruptions and other behavioral issues. Two participants stressed the importance of planning engaging lessons and keeping students engaged from bell-to-bell.

Overall, teachers and administrators found positive reinforcement, providing academic supports, developing relationships with students, teaching expectations and consequences, and planning engaging lessons as effective classroom management strategies for promoting high student achievement. Both groups identified teaching expectations and consequences and developing relationships with students as effective classroom management strategies for improving academic achievement. Teachers included positive reinforcement and providing academic supports while administrators included planning engaging lessons.

Similarly, teachers and administrators found positive reinforcement, providing behavior supports, developing relationships with students, teaching expectations and consequences, and planning engaging lessons as effective classroom management strategies for reducing discipline infractions. Teachers and administrators identified teaching expectations and consequences and developing relationships with students as effective classroom management strategies for decreasing discipline infractions. Teachers included positive reinforcement and providing behavior supports while administrators included planning engaging lessons.

Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 2: Professional Development Needs

Participants in this study described their experiences with previous professional development opportunities, current professional development needs, and preferences regarding delivery types and formats. The emergent themes related to professional development experiences and needs included workshops with or without follow-up sessions, no classroom

management related professional development at all, online professional development, and coaching with follow-up sessions. Six out of the eight participants indicated that they had participated in classroom management workshops. Only three of those participants received any type of follow-up. Two participants indicated they had participated in either peer coaching or peer conversations with follow-ups on a regular basis. One participant participated in coaching from an outside consultant with follow-ups. One participant experienced online professional development and one participant received no professional development related to classroom management within the past 5 years.

Emergent themes related to professional development needs included providing behavior supports, seating and grouping options, PBIS, developing classroom management plans, poverty, establishing relationships, teaching expectations, student engagement, effective planning, and providing feedback. Participants identified seating and grouping and relationships most often (three participants each) and behavior supports and engagement second most often (two participants each).

Participants identified several common preferred professional development types including peer coaching and observation, face-to-face or workshops, and online learning. Six participants indicated a preference for face-to-face workshops. Two participants indicated a preference for online learning. Five participants indicated a preference for peer coaching and observation.

In general, the participants described professional development experiences related to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting academic achievement as a mix of relevant and non-relevant content delivered via workshops with and without follow-ups, peer learning, online learning, and coaching with follow-ups. Teachers reported more

instances of workshops with limited to no follow-ups while administrators reported online learning and coaching in addition to workshops.

Overall, teachers and administrators identified providing behavior supports, seating, grouping, PBIS, classroom management plans, teaching students from poverty, developing relationships, teaching expectations, engagement, planning, and feedback as top professional development needs in relation to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and promoting student academic achievement. Both groups identified providing behavior supports and developing relationships as top needs. Teachers included seating, grouping, PBIS, classroom management plans, teaching students from poverty, and teaching expectations in their top needs while administrators included engagement, planning, and feedback.

Teachers and administrators identified peer learning, face-to-face learning or workshops, and online learning as effective professional development delivery types or formats. Teachers identified peer learning as effective while administrators did not.

Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 3: The Role of the Administrator

Participants reflected upon the role of the administrator in relation to classroom management, discipline, and professional development. Emergent themes related to the administrator's role in classroom management and discipline included supporting teachers, applying policies consistently and fairly, establishing relationships with teachers and students, and being a presence in classrooms on a regular basis. Five out of the eight participants described the role of the administrator as supporting teachers. Three participants identified consistency and fairness as the role of the administrator. Establishing relationships and consistent classroom presence were identified by two participants each. Six out of eight participants described the role

of the administrator in relation to providing professional development as making data-based decisions about the types of professional development to provide and to whom. Two participants were unsure about the role of the building level administrator in providing professional development due to the role of district level administrators.

Overall, participants described the role of the administrator in terms of positive classroom management strategies to reduce discipline infractions as supporting teachers, maintaining consistency and fairness, developing relationships with teachers and students, and maintaining a presence in classrooms. Teachers and administrators described identical roles with the exception of maintaining a presence in classrooms which was only identified by administrators as a part of their role.

Participants described the role of the administrator in professional development in relation to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions as providing data-based professional development and targeted supports. Teachers included that administrators must follow professional development plans as prescribed by central office as well.

Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 4: Policy Recommendations

Finally, participants evaluated current policies related to classroom management, discipline, and professional development. Emergent themes related to current policy included inconsistent application of current policies and ineffective written policies. Out of eight participants, three participants rated current policies as inconsistently applied, and two participants rated current policies as ineffective. Only three participants rated current policies as effective. Emergent themes related to policy recommendations included increasing consistency of application of current policies, adding additional professional development requirements

specifically around classroom management, strengthening parental involvement policies, and adjustments for non-violent or classroom offenses. No one policy change was recommended by a majority of participants. Increasing consistency, adjusting policies for non-violent offenses, providing additional professional development, and no changes were recommended by two participants each.

Overall, participants recommended stronger parental involvement policy, adjusting policies for non-violent offenses, increasing the consistency of application of current policies, including teachers in administrative processes, developing policies based on grade levels, and specific PBIS policies for reducing discipline infractions. Teachers and administrators recommended classroom management professional development for new teachers, increasing the consistency of application of current professional development policies, including teachers in administrative processes, and additional professional development for implementing PBIS as policy changes related to classroom management for promoting student academic achievement.

Discussion

Narratives were presented from the interviews of current teachers and administrators to add to the discussion regarding classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and increasing student achievement. Through the interview process, participants shared their perspectives and experiences related to classroom management, professional development, the role of the administrator, and policy recommendations.

When considering classroom management, the results of this study are consistent with previous studies in that participants identified establishing clear expectations and consequences, taking a personal interest in students, providing a range of academic and behavioral supports to high-needs students, intentionally fostering teacher-student relationships, maximizing structure

in the classroom, and planning lessons to increase student engagement as effective classroom management strategies (Grasley-Boy et al., 2019; MacSuga & Simonsen, 2011; Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Simonsen et al., 2014). Participants also stated that effective classroom management reduced discipline referrals and increased student achievement at the same time.

According to previous research, in order for professional development to be effective, it must be ongoing, tied to other learning activities and school initiatives, encourage active learning by teachers, focus on student achievement, include coaching or other forms of assistance, and include constructive feedback (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond et al. 2017; Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; State et al., 2019; Yoon et al., 2007). Based on the results of this study, participants as a whole did not receive effective professional development related to classroom management within the past five years.

Based upon recommendations for professional development needs, the teachers and administrators in this study were aware of the need for professional development in areas identified by Marzano and Marzano (2003) as components of effective classroom management for themselves and others. Identified components included providing behavior supports, seating and grouping options, PBIS, developing classroom management plans, poverty, establishing relationships, teaching expectations, student engagement, effective planning, and providing feedback.

Participant responses regarding professional development delivery types correlated with adult learning theory and previous research. One participant specifically stated that the format of the professional development opportunity did not matter as long as the topic was relevant to his job and current needs which correlates with adult learning theory's assumptions that as individuals mature, their readiness to learn is increasingly related to the tasks required for the

roles they fill (Knowles, 1973). Preferences for types of professional development included face-to-face, peer coaching and observation, and online opportunities. While the majority of participants indicated face-to-face as a professional development preference, previous studies indicated that programs with fourteen or more contact hours showed positive effects (Yoon et al., 2007). Previous studies indicated that coaching individually or paired with other professional development models produced at least a modest improvement in teachers' instructional practices (Gregory et al., 2014; Kraft et al., 2018; Kraft & Blazar, 2013). Additional research indicated that online professional development was a significant means of receiving training, but without follow-up sessions lacked the effectiveness of online professional development paired with consultation or coaching (Erickson et al., 2012; Jimenez et al., 2016; State et al., 2019).

In reflecting upon the role of the administrator in classroom management and discipline, participants identified the following consistent with previous research and leadership theories: administrator supported discipline plans and approaches, administrator support of teachers and staff in handling discipline issues, and maintaining visibility in the building and classrooms (Curran, 2017; Marks & Printy, 2003; Marzano, 2011; Mukuria, 2002; Nooruddin & Baig, 2014; Welsh & Little, 2018). Also consistent with previous research, participants identified providing data-based, targeted professional development as a major role of the administrator (Marks & Printy, 2003; Simonsen et al., 2014; State et al., 2019).

Recommendations for policy changes were as varied as the participants themselves. Four out of the eight participants either recommended no changes or recommended to increase consistency in applying the policies as they were currently written. Other changes, including additional professional development focused on classroom management and PBIS, and adjustments to non-violent offenses, mirror previous research (Mansfield et al., 2018; Skiba &

Losen, 2016; Welsh & Little, 2018). Other participant recommendations included stronger parental involvement policies and separate policies for specific grade levels.

The study was grounded in several theories including adult learning theory (Knowles, 1973), social learning theory (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018), and transformational and shared instructional leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003). Adult learning theory shaped the exploration of professional development experiences, needs, and preferences. Specific assumptions about the adult learner considered in this study included the following: (1) as people grow and mature, the self-concept changes from dependency on others to self-directedness; (2) as people mature, their experiences become a resource for learning; (3) as people mature, their readiness to learn is increasingly related to the tasks required for the roles they fill; and (4) as people mature, they have an increasingly problem-centered approach to learning (Knowles, 1973). Participants noted in several cases that professional development became more effective the more it related to their current jobs.

Bandura's social learning theory states that people learn from each other through observation, imitation, modeling, and reinforcement (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Social learning theory combined with adult learning theory framed the examination of participants' reflections around classroom management and professional development. Several participants listed teaching expectations and consequences as effective methods of classroom management. Participants also indicated that they learned best from peers either through formal coaching and observation or through informal discussions regarding issues within their classrooms.

Because administrators shape the climate of the school through transformational and shared instructional leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003), this study solicited the perspective of school administrators about classroom management, professional development, and policy.

Participants' responses regarding the role of the administrator in classroom management, discipline, and professional development were viewed through the lens of shared instructional leadership because shared instructional leaders provide resources and instructional support to teachers in order to "maintain congruence and consistency of the educational program" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 374). The majority of participants indicated that the role of the administrator in relation to classroom management, discipline, and professional development should be to support teachers and make data-based decisions around professional development opportunities.

The literature review consisted of theoretical and empirical research conducted regarding the effects of exclusionary discipline, classroom management, professional development, the role of the administrator in reducing discipline infractions, and school discipline policies. The literature included multiple studies showing the negative effects of exclusionary discipline on students including increased drop-out rates, reduced academic achievement, and lower self-esteem (Allman & Slate, 2011; Arcia, 2006; Gregory et al., 2010; Marchbanks et al., 2014; Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Participants indicated that in general, effective classroom management strategies reduced discipline infractions and increased academic achievement at the same time. Additional studies indicated that in many cases pre-service teachers did not feel prepared to handle classroom management and discipline issues when they entered their own classrooms (Begeny & Martens, 2006; Dobler et al., 2009; Monroe et al., 2010; Siebert, 2005; Stoughton, 2007).

Studies related to professional development found that when teachers participate in ongoing, relevant, and timely professional development about classroom management, student behavior and academic performance improved (Simonsen et al., 2014). Participants in this study

indicated that professional development opportunities around classroom management and discipline often lacked relevance or did not occur at all.

Further research regarding discipline policies found that upon the reversal of zero-tolerance policies, schools began to focus on restorative practices and behavioral supports in order to reduce instances of exclusionary discipline (Mansfield et al., 2018; Skiba & Losen, 2016; Welsh & Little, 2018). Participants also indicated providing behavioral supports improved classroom management effectiveness.

Limitations

Based on the qualitative research design selected for the study and due to the small sample size of participants from a single geographical area, results of this study may not be generalizable to the general population. All participants worked in public schools within one state. Results may have been different if participants included teachers and administrators from diverse schools. Also, all participants had at least six years of experience in education. Results may have been different if participants included teachers with less than six years' experience.

General Recommendations for Practitioners and Policymakers

Schools continue to face issues relating to the effects of exclusionary discipline on student achievement. Classroom management, professional development, administrator duties, and school and district level policies must be considered as means to negate those negative effects. Based upon participant responses in addition to current research, the following are general recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of teachers and administrators in the area of classroom management in order to decrease discipline referrals and increase student achievement.

1. At the beginning of each school year, conduct a survey of staff to determine professional development delivery type preferences and personally identified professional development needs. Also, evaluate the use of research-based classroom management strategies through classroom observations and review of discipline data on a regular basis.
2. Provide data-based, targeted professional development to address areas of need. Utilize teachers and other staff who demonstrate strengths in specific classroom management strategies to provide instruction, coaching, and/or follow-up as a part of teachers' professional development plans. When possible, professional development plans should include at least fourteen contact hours including direct instruction, follow-up, observations, and feedback.
3. Provide training for administrators on how to foster relationships with staff and students as well as how to be a positive, visible presence throughout the school building and in classrooms.
4. Review current codes of conduct to evaluate the appropriateness and relevance of current expectations and consequences. Include in the discussion the feasibility of enforcement and an evaluation of benefit versus risk caused by specific consequences, especially for non-violent and classroom offenses.
5. Evaluate the consistency of policy adherence across schools, administrators, and demographics including race and disability to ensure written policies are enforced consistently and fairly.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study investigated teacher and administrator experiences of positive classroom management strategies, professional needs, the role of the administrator, and policy recommendations as they related to classroom management for reducing discipline infractions and increasing student achievement. The following are recommendations for future research.

1. This study used a qualitative research design and examined a small sample size in Mississippi public schools. Future research should include a quantitative research design with a larger sample of teachers and administrators in various settings.
2. This study did not differentiate between staff of schools with varying levels of exclusionary discipline. Future research should include an investigation into the different professional development and policy needs of schools and districts specifically with high levels of exclusionary discipline as well as schools with low numbers of discipline infractions.
3. Future research studies should consider student opinions regarding classroom management strategies and the role of the administrator in promoting positive behaviors and student achievement.
4. Future research studies should consider the effects of specific classroom management policies on the number of discipline infractions.
5. Future studies should examine the effects of matching participant preferences or learning styles to professional development delivery in relation to classroom management strategies for increasing student achievement and decreasing discipline infractions.

6. Future studies should consider social/emotional learning, cultural responsiveness, and restorative practices and their effects on classroom management and discipline infractions.
7. Future studies should focus on specific classroom management strategies and professional development needs unique to elementary grades, middle grades, and secondary grades.

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APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION FROM THE HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION PROGRAM

DATE: December 13, 2019

TO: Frankie Williams, PhD, Educational Leadership, Eric Moyen; Leigh McMullan; Stephanie King Eric Moyen, PhD, Educational Leadership, Jennifer Maness, Ed.S., Educational Leadership, Leigh McMullan, PhD, Educational Leadership, Stephanie King, PhD, Educational Leadership

PROTOCOL TITLE: Effective Classroom Management Strategies, Professional Development Needs, Role of Principal, and Policy Recommendations for Reducing Discipline Infractions

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-19-527

Approval Date: December 13, 2019 Expiration Date: December 12, 2024

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

The review of your research study referenced above has been completed. The HRPP had made an Exemption Determination as defined by 45 CFR 46.101(b)2. Based on this determination, and in accordance with Federal Regulations, your research does not require further oversight by the HRPP.

Employing best practices for Exempt studies is strongly encouraged such as adherence to the ethical principles articulated in the Belmont Report, found at www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/# as well as the MSU HRPP Operations Manual, found at www.orc.msstate.edu/humansubjects. As part of best practices in research, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that personnel added after this Exemption Determination notice have completed IRB training prior to their involvement in the research study. Additionally, to protect the confidentiality of research participants, we encourage you to destroy private information which can be linked to the identities of individuals as soon as it is reasonable to do so.

Based on this determination, this study has been inactivated in our system. This means that recruitment, enrollment, data collection, and/or data analysis **CAN** continue, yet personnel and procedural amendments to this study are no longer required. **If at any point, however, the risk to participants increases, you must contact the HRPP immediately. If you are unsure if your proposed change would increase the risk, please call the HRPP office and they can guide you.**

If this research is for a thesis or dissertation, this notification is your official documentation that the HRPP has made this determination.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact the HRPP Office at irb@research.msstate.edu. We wish you success in carrying out your research project.

Review Type: EXEMPT
IRB Number: IORG0000467

APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

Dear Invitee,

My name is Jennifer Maness. I am a doctoral student in Mississippi State University's Educational Leadership Program. I am requesting your participation in my study addressing effective classroom management strategies, professional development needs, the role of the principal, and policy recommendations for reducing discipline infractions from the perspective of administrators and teachers.

You have been selected because you were a classroom teacher or administrator in a public school in Mississippi during the 2018-19 school year. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study's results will be completely anonymous. Your name and other identifying information will not be revealed.

If you would like to participate in this study, please read the Informed Consent Letter attached and sign to acknowledge your participation in the study. Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Maness, Doctoral Student, Mississippi State University

Jag10@msstate.edu

662-295-2374

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Informed Consent Form for Participation in Research for Exempt Research*

IRB Approval Number: IRB-19-527

Title of Research Study: Effective Classroom Management Strategies, Professional Development Needs, Role of Principal, and Policy Recommendations for Reducing Discipline Infractions

Researcher(s): Jennifer Maness, Mississippi State University; Advisor: Dr. Frankie Williams, Mississippi State University.

Procedures: We would like to ask you to participate in a research study. You were chosen as a potential participant because you were employed by a public school in the state of Mississippi during the 2018-19 school year.

If you choose to participate in the study, you will be interviewed by Jennifer Maness at a mutually agreed upon time via either video conference or phone call. Interviews will be semi-structured and will be audio recorded. Interviews should last approximately 1 hour. Interview recordings and transcripts will only be accessible by Jennifer Maness and Dr. Frankie Williams. Your name will not be reported in the study.

Questions: If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact Dr. Frankie Williams at fwilliams@colled.msstate.edu.

Voluntary Participation: Please understand that your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Participant Signature

Date

Investigator Signature

Date

*The MSU HRPP has granted an exemption for this research. Therefore, a formal review of this consent document was not required.

APPENDIX D

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Participant Profile:

1. What was your position during the 2018-19 school year?
2. To which school site were you assigned during the 2018-19 school year?
3. How many years of experience do you have in education as teacher or administrator?
4. What is your highest degree level?
5. What was your area of teaching during the 2018-19 school year? (teachers only)

Strategies:

1. Describe your current classroom management system or style.
2. In your experience, what have been the most effective classroom management strategies you have used? The least effective?
3. Describe any classroom management strategies that you would like to try or observe.

Professional development:

1. What professional development regarding classroom management or behavior have you received over the past 5 years?
2. On a scale from 0 to 5, with 0 being you would never use it and 5 being very relevant, how relevant to your classroom/school was the training?
3. Did you receive any follow-up associated with any of the training? If yes, please describe.
4. What areas or topics relating to reducing discipline infractions would you like additional professional development about?

5. What areas or topics relating to reducing discipline infractions do you think others in your school would benefit from?
6. What types of professional development do you find most effective for yourself? (e.g., face-to-face, online/self-paced, action research, peer coaching/observation)
7. What, if anything, would you like to know more about in relation to how classroom management affects student achievement?

Role of the Principal:

1. What do you see as the role of the principal/administrator in your school in terms of classroom management, discipline, and reducing discipline infractions?
2. How effective is your administrator at filling this role?
3. What do you see as the role of the principal/administrator in your school in terms of professional development relating to classroom management, discipline, and reducing discipline infractions?
4. How effective is your administrator at filling this role?

Policy:

1. How effective is current school or district policy at reducing discipline infractions?
2. What changes or additions to school or district policy relating to classroom management and discipline do you feel would help reduce discipline infractions?
3. What changes or additions to school or district policy relating to classroom management and discipline do you feel would help increase student achievement?